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# Ashland Theological Journal

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ISSUE

With this 1981 issue we introduce a new name, a new editor and a new format. The name has become the **Ashland Theological JOURNAL**. With this change in name comes a shift from issues featuring lengthy articles by one or two authors to publishing a number of shorter articles allowing for greater faculty participation. Our conception of the journal is that it would include scholarly works, reviews and other essays from a number of disciplines. In this issue, for example, we include a number of current faculty projects as well as a synopsis of thesis research by 1981 graduating Seniors. As the new editor, I would like to thank Dr. Joseph Kikasola for his previous service as editor and for graciously choosing to remain on the editorial committee.

Our major scholarly article is by Professor Douglas E. Chismar, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics. The questions he raises and discusses are pertinent to our daily lives. Can we reason about our ethical beliefs? How much are our moral attitudes simply a matter of feelings and emotions? We Christians are faced with many in our modern culture who believe that it is useless or impossible to reason about ethics; the result is *relativism*, the belief that "whatever an individual believes to be true is true for him." Professor Chismar, reporting on his current doctoral dissertation at Ohio State University, explores a number of possible approaches to ethical reasoning. He then takes some first steps toward constructing an approach of his own—a multi-faceted model of ethical "attitudes" which allows for the role of feelings and emotions in ethical belief, while preserving the cognitive or rational dimension. The approach thus treats we humans realistically as the emotional beings that we are, yet holds out for the possibility of rationally assessing ethical orientations and value systems through the consideration of "cognitive structures." As Christians seek to defend their faith and to touch the culture around them, they require a consistent and biblical understanding of human nature in order to accomplish their task. This model that Professor Chismar shares with us is exciting and of great import because it promises to open up new and fruitful ways to conceive of humans as they engage in ethical reasoning.

In our second article, "Biblical Feminism and the New Testament," Dr. Jerry R. Flora, Associate Professor of Christian Theology, reports to us the initial stages of his current research. Sharing with us four major books on women and the New Testament, Professor Flora articulates, reviews and contrasts the approaches that are used and lays solid groundwork for further study. In a careful



and considerate manner, Dr. Flora lucidly treats monographs both favoring and opposing "biblical feminism." I'm sure the treatment of this important issue will be of interest to all.

In the realm of Christian Education, our resident expert Dr. Richard E. Allison, Associate Professor of Christian Education, provides us with a useful tool for "formative evaluation" of a Sunday School program. His five-part questionnaire covers areas such as pastoral leadership, adequate planning and learner focus. A product of Dr. Allison's most recent seminars on church expansion, this tool and accompanying charts is both valuable and implementable.

In "A Solemn One Way Trip Becomes a Joyous Roundtrip!," Dr. O. Kenneth Walther, Associate Professor of Greek and New Testament, gives us a new perspective on Luke's account of the Emmaus appearance. Using the motif of the "Parabolic Ballad," Professor Walther creatively illustrates the intriguing structure of the account and provides keen insight into the passage.

It is hoped that in each issue we may include a more sermonic piece. In this particular issue, Dr. Arthur M. Climenhaga, Director of Academic Affairs and Professor of Theology and Missions, exhorts us to vigilance in "Another Way?" This was the first in a series of Staley lectures delivered at Malone College on January 20, 1981.

This issue represents well the eclectic nature of our faculty and some of their scholarly interests. Not every faculty member in this issue, for example, would necessarily agree with his fellow contributors. And yet, there is a love and mutual respect on this campus that transcends differences of viewpoint and fosters a caring community characterized by tolerance.

—David A. Rausch, **Editor**

# ETHICAL REASONING: A PHILOSOPHICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

by Douglas E. Chismar

Since Aristotle's writing of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, philosophers have sought to understand the nature and scope of ethical reasoning. Some of the most insightful attempts have been those which worked to integrate the investigation of ethical questions with related topics in other areas of knowledge. Such related areas have included epistemology, metaphysics, and the social sciences. In this paper, we will consider attempts to understand the nature of ethical reasoning which bring psychological and philosophical issues into a common forum.

Psychology and philosophy have been veritable "bosom buddies," particularly since the dawn of modern (post-medieval) philosophy. Modern philosophers, often beginning from an epistemological standpoint, have on many an occasion blundered unwittingly into doing primitive psychology. An example is Hume's lengthy and detailed treatment of the emotions in the second *Enquiry*. Others have been openly enamored to a prominent psychological perspective, and have sought to remake philosophy accordingly. Thus in W.V. Quine's *Word and Object*, behaviorism and epistemology become one. Hopefully, these two approaches do not exhaust the alternatives. Whatever approach one chooses, philosophers cannot afford to overlook the many insights afforded them by contemporary psychology. This is especially the case in regard to the study of ethical reasoning.

Moral or ethical reasoning (we shall use the terms synonymously) denotes the thinking processes which play a part in the making of moral decisions. Philosophers historically have made numerous attempts to define in some detail the nature of these processes. The study is made problematic by the fact that philosophers are concerned not only with describing how people *do* often think, but also how they *ought* to think. That is, it is occupied with prescriptive as well as descriptive considerations. To define moral reasoning, for most philosophers, is to offer a normative theory which, when consistently applied, correctly sets the boundaries of morally acceptable conduct.<sup>1</sup> Having defined a theory, it is put to the test over a wide range of applications in search of counterexamples—instances in which the method of reasoning turns out to be flawed, leading to undesirable consequences. Thus utilitarian theories are challenged by cases in which the sacrifice of a minority appears to bring about the greatest happiness of the greatest

number; Kantian deontological theories are tested by cases in which actions judged inherently wrong by the theory (e.g., lying) appear to actually be justified when alternative actions seem to lead to even worse consequences (not lying, and sacrificing a life). Moral theories which yield outcomes which are clearly contrary to the standard intuitions or widely accepted moral beliefs of one's moral community are either rejected or modified to cover the adverse cases.

Essential to the process of testing moral theories, as we have described it, is the availability of a relatively unquestioned standard against which the outcomes of a theory can be tested. This standard may be revealed truth (the Bible), but for many philosophers it is simply a set of actions or qualities the normative acceptability of which is basically uncontroversial. Hence, a theory which allows, across the board, for arbitrary taking of life, stealing, or cheating is obviously unacceptable. Likewise, an approach which does not find a place of merit for such praiseworthy qualities as altruism or fairness is an approach destined for the ethical scrap pile. Only after a theory passes these initial, uncontroversial tests, can it be then applied to more difficult ethical issues in which no standard or agreed-upon intuitions are available to guide the way.

The basic intuitions of a moral community are those which play the most central part in what are often referred to as "value systems". Value theory is an important point of confluence of philosophy and psychology. Philosophers are concerned with identifying the most fundamental values, and the role they play in moral reasoning. Psychologists seek to describe the formation, maintenance, structuring and change of value systems, especially as values have impact upon behavior. We will discuss values and their relation to moral reasoning when treating "attitudes" in a later section.

An even more important juncture of philosophy and psychology has to do with defining the concept of "rationality". As we shall observe in the next section, philosophers have often disagreed on what they view as "rational" procedure. One may mean simply being consistent, or one may go further to state the ends with which one must be consistent. Psychologists also discuss the concept of rationality, but generally extend its meaning beyond a purely cognitive sense to embrace the idea of a high or efficient level of individual functioning. How this expanded notion of rationality relates to the judgment of good and bad ethical reasoning will be a topic of interest in the latter portions of this paper. At this point, we note five important issues surrounding ethical reasoning and rationality:

- (1) What does it mean to be "rational" in one's moral reasoning?
- (2) To what extent is reason (cognition) a determinant of the individual's moral decisions? Are moral decisions the result of reasons, causes, or both?
- (3) To what extent can an individual become *more* rational in his moral decision-making?
- (4) To what extent is it desirable that moral decision making be a cognitive, rational process (e.g., in some cases, a warm heart might be preferable to a "cold, calculating mind")?
- (5) Can psychological characterizations of moral reasoning styles aid us in evaluating philosophically-constructed ethical theories?

In the following section, we will survey some of the attempts of philosophers and psychologists to answer these difficult questions. In order to highlight one important variable (relating to question No. 2), we arrange the surveyed theoretical approaches along a cognitive-noncognitive continuum. Highly cognitive approaches are those which stress that reasoning plays a significant role in the formation of values and beliefs, and in deciding verbal and behavioral outcomes. Noncognitive approaches are those which interpret moral decision making, and the process of moral reasoning in general, as largely the result of nonrational causes, whether internally generated or the product of environmental impingements. It turns out that both philosophers and psychologists have staked out a number of positions on the cognitive-noncognitive continuum.

## I. Some Theoretical Approaches to Ethical Reasoning

### *A Noncognitive Psychological Approach*

Psychology as a discipline began in a highly mentalistic fashion (perhaps as an offshoot of philosophical epistemology). Thus early psychological treatments were strongly cognitive in nature. A major turning point was the appearance of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic perspective. According to Freud, most human behavior is to be explained as a result of the interplay of largely unconscious drives. He maintains "that mental processes are essentially unconscious, and that those which are conscious are merely isolated acts and parts of the whole psychic entity."<sup>2</sup> Freud portrays the embattled ego, constrained by reality, impelled by the guilt-producing demands of the superego, and striving to hold down the thrusts of the libido, which is an overflowing well of biological energy.<sup>3</sup> According to the psychoanalytic perspective, reasoning processes exist primarily to fulfill the purpose of rationalization—the justification to the ego of the inevitable inner conflict taking place between the various drives and impulses. Rationalization



often takes the form of "defense mechanisms," by which inner tensions are at least temporarily released. Typical examples are aggression, regression, projection, withdrawal and repression.

One's style of reasoning, then, is often but a *post facto* expression of inner events and conflicts. While it may serve as a useful indicator to certain unconscious events (as indirectly manifested), reasoning itself is ultimately but a facade, jabbering on about things which have little to do with what is really important to the individual. Reasoning is viewed as a function of more basic events, motivations and causes hidden in the personality structure.<sup>4</sup> Moral reasoning is especially suspect in that it is a tool of repressive societal moral systems—viewed by Freud in at least one stage of his career as a major cause of mental illness. Opposition of the socially-approved internalized moral norms to the flow of energy which constitutes the "id" leads to anxiety, guilt, "reaction formations," etc. Needless to say, this view casts the activity to moral reasoning in an extremely morbid and skeptical light.

### ***A Noncognitive Philosophical Approach***

A somewhat similar model is offered by Charles L. Stevenson. Stevenson distinguishes between a "disagreement in belief" and a "disagreement in attitude." These two kinds of disagreements can take place in every kind of discourse, ethics as well. Because *two* kinds of disagreement are possible, our concept of ethical reasoning must somehow be expanded to include both:

If ethical arguments, as we encounter them in everyday life, involved disagreement in belief exclusively—whether the beliefs were about attitudes or about something else—then I should have no quarrel with the ordinary sort of naturalistic analysis. Normative judgments could be taken as scientific statements, and amenable to the usual scientific proof. But a moment's attention will readily show that disagreement in belief has not the exclusive role that theory has so repeatedly ascribed to it. It must be readily granted that ethical arguments usually involve disagreement in belief; but they *also* involve disagreement in attitude. And the conspicuous role of disagreement in attitude is what we usually take, whether we realize it or not, as the distinguishing feature of ethical arguments.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, Stevenson arrives at a "working model" of moral terms which does justice to this heavily attitudinal character which he finds characterizing ethical discussions. 'This is good' is translated into 'I approve of this; do so as well,' while 'This is bad' becomes 'I disapprove of this; do so as well.'<sup>6</sup> Stevenson acknowledges that this is a "crude" interpretation (and suggests some possible alterations), but adopts these as a sufficiently usable working model.



A great deal of Stevenson's attention is devoted to the question of how ethical disagreements are to be resolved. Stuart Chase, in a review of Stevenson's *Ethics and Language*, concludes that this amounts to the basic question, "how much can individuals be influenced by reason?"<sup>7</sup> Stevenson resolves this question into two separate ones, corresponding to the dual categories of disagreements in belief and disagreements in attitude. Disagreements in belief, he suggests, are highly amenable to resolution, essentially through appeal to the scientific method.<sup>8</sup> This may also lead to resolution of disagreement in attitudes, "due simply to the psychological fact that altered beliefs may cause altered attitudes."<sup>9</sup> In this case, complete agreement on an ethical issue (a dispute about values) has been obtained, as both forms of disagreement are resolved.

Unfortunately, while one might hope that scientific and rational methods could solve all ethical disputes, such hopes do not find support in experience. Stevenson notes that "it is logically possible, at least, that two men should continue to disagree in attitude even though they had all their beliefs in common, and even though neither had made any logical or inductive error."<sup>10</sup> Continuing disagreements (in attitude) are common, inasmuch as they are often due to "differences in temperament, or in early training, or in social status"—matters relatively closed to the sphere of rational discussion.<sup>11</sup> Given that this is the case, Stevenson pessimistically concludes that disagreement in ethical attitudes generally persist until non-rational methods for dealing with them are applied (e.g., impassioned, moving oratory). Thus, the task of the moralist is occasionally a cognitive, or rational one, but more often a noncognitive "persuasive" one. "Insofar as normative ethics draws from the sciences, in order to change attitudes via changing people's beliefs, it *draws from all the sciences*; but a moralist's peculiar aim—that of *redirecting attitudes—is a type of activity, rather than knowledge, and falls within no science.*"<sup>12</sup>

### ***A Modified Noncognitive Approach***

In Book III, Part I, section 1 of the *Treatise*, David Hume raises the question "whether 'tis by means of our *ideas* or *impressions* we distinguish betwixt vice and virtue, and pronounce an action blameable and praise-worthy?"<sup>13</sup> Those holding that virtue "is nothing but a conformity to reason" and that there are "eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being that considers them" are those who "concur in the opinion, that morality, like truth, is discern'd merely by ideas." Hume concludes, on the contrary, that as morals have an influence on actions, "they cannot be deriv'd from reason." "Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly

impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason."<sup>14</sup>

In the remainder of the *Treatise*, Hume attempts to explain how the difference between vice and virtue is to be traced to "some impression or sentiment they occasion." He endeavors to define this "moral sense" as a "peculiar kind" of pleasure and pain, felt "only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest"<sup>15</sup> (though it may be the generalized result of particular, self-interested experiences in the past). In addition, he works to offer an account of the genesis of these sentiments, both from natural and artificial origins. Justice, for example, is of artificial origin, coming to be valued by men due to its learned utility, it being "requisite to the public interest, and to that of every individual."<sup>16</sup> The sense of sympathy for others, on the other hand, is natural, insofar as "the minds of all men are similar in their feelings and operations."<sup>17</sup> In the *Enquiry*, Hume discusses this category in great detail, noting those qualities which are "immediately agreeable to ourselves" and those "immediately agreeable to others."<sup>18</sup> These qualities, as "agreeable" ones, differing from those perceived as "useful," evoke immediately the peculiar kind of sentiments of easiness or satisfaction which eventually come to be designated "virtue and vice." It is in this way that Hume attempts to offer an explanation, if not justification, for the presence of "standard intuitions" spoken of in the introduction to this paper.

To sum up, reasoning is involved with the discernment of right and wrong in only a mediate or indirect way.<sup>19</sup> Reason, as "the discovery of truth or falsehood," has to do solely with "an agreement or disagreement either to the *real* relations of ideas, or to *real* existence and matters of fact;" these are "original facts and realities, complete in themselves, and implying no reference to other passions, volitions or actions."<sup>20</sup> As applied to ethics, reason has but two functions. It (1) sometimes "excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something which is a proper object of it," and (2) "it discovers the connection of causes and effects so as to afford us means of exerting any passion."<sup>21</sup> Reason and judgment may be "the mediate cause of an action, by *prompting* or by *directing* a passion."<sup>22</sup> Outside of these two roles, however, reason is "wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals."<sup>23</sup>

Before moving on, we note that a major difference between Hume's account, and that of Stevenson, is that Hume attempts to offer a rational explanation for the kinds of sentiments humans experience. Although ethical norms are founded on the basis of sentiment and not reasons, a "reason" can be given for the occurrence of the sentiments, based on the "usefulness or agreeableness" or their objects. These "meta-reasons" for ethical norms are employed when

Hume argues against the "sensible knave" who would violate the conventional morality for his own profit. Stevenson, emphasizing individual differences in personality and upbringing, does not attempt to offer this kind of metatheoretical rationale.

### *A Cognitive Psychological Approach*

Lawrence Kohlberg, an educator, psychologist and philosopher from Harvard University, has been particularly concerned to evolve a successful method of moral education capable of inducing moral character growth in individuals regardless of their present state of moral development. In order to accomplish this, he has constructed a developmental model and corresponding measuring instruments by which it is possible to determine an individual's stage of development. Through strongly cognitive methods, Kohlberg seeks to bring subjects to a conscious awareness of how far they have advanced, and hopefully to further progress in their style of moral reasoning. Kohlberg's method offers the hope of precision and controlled testing of moral education techniques; as a result, he has received much attention in the literature and has attracted an enthusiastic band of disciples. However, he has also not been without his critics. The following is his essential method, as it has evolved in the past twenty years.<sup>24</sup>

Kohlberg's approach is generally described as a "cognitive-developmental" approach.<sup>25</sup> This is an excellent description, capturing the central motifs of his thought. On the one hand, it is a cognitive approach. Kohlberg is centrally committed to the importance of cognition (i.e., of thinking and reasoning processes) in moral decision-making. This does not entail that he accepts the classical notion of the "rational man"—i.e., the view that humans, like virtual computers are eminently rational beings, scarcely swayed by feelings, motivations or other baser sorts of impulses. A century of psychology and generations of human experience have served to sufficiently dispel that notion. Yet Kohlberg does not swing to the other extreme with the noncognitivists (cf. *supra*). Reasoning is regarded by Kohlberg as an important if not all-encompassing, determinant of human action. This renders the study of the modes of cognitive processing (in this case, about ethical matters) highly significant. Which leads to the second primary motif of Kohlberg's thought.

Influenced greatly by the developmental theory and research of Jean Piaget,<sup>26</sup> Kohlberg maintains that individuals advance through predictable stages of development in their ability to think and reason. Thus, certain essential cognitive capacities (e.g., the ability to make fine or subtle distinctions) are less present or even absent in the young child, but gradually come into play as the child



develops both mentally and socially. Some, who suffer genetic impairments in learning abilities, may never develop these skills. Generalizing upon these observations, if one's cognitive skills are such that they develop over time according to a fairly regular sequence of growth, then one's *moral* reasoning abilities as well must develop according to this same sequence. It becomes possible, then, to postulate stages of moral reasoning development and, presuming (as Kohlberg does) that moral reasoning plays a significant role in determining moral behavior, one can suggest general stages of moral development, as based on the stage at which one reasons. This completes the essential theoretical background of Kohlberg's approach; it remains to note the techniques by which he measures and identifies these "stages," and some of the proposed strategies for enhancing moral development which he has sought to test in a variety of moral education settings.

Identification of the stages of moral reasoning is made possible by the assumed link between styles of moral thinking and moral behavior outcomes. Kohlberg begins by searching out a short list of uncontroversially praiseworthy moral traits such as helping, sharing and resisting the temptation to cheat.<sup>27</sup> His next step is both a conceptual and empirical one. In terms of conceptual analysis, he considers approaches to thinking about ethics most likely to motivate one to maximize these morally praiseworthy behaviors in one's own conduct patterns. In line with his own philosophical preferences, and Piaget's cognitive analysis, he chooses theoretical reasoning approaches emphasizing justice, fairness and individual autonomy. Conjointly, through an empirical interview process, Kohlberg identifies regularities in the thinking patterns of those not so accustomed to maximizing these behaviors (e.g., juvenile delinquents, hardened criminals) and those who often exemplify them (Kohlberg's enlightened colleagues? Those in the "helping professions?"). Collation of the results of these two approaches yields, for Kohlberg, a set of six stages, divided into three basic levels.<sup>28</sup> This schema can now be submitted to further testing, particularly for predictive accuracy (e.g., can one identify the hardened criminal by blind exposure to a sample of his moral reasoning or, vice versa, can one predict how a self-sacrificing missionary doctor will answer questions on a moral reasoning interview?).

Finally, assuming that Kohlberg's six stages schema has received a high degree of experimental confirmation (as claimed by many adherents, and contested by the critics),<sup>29</sup> it can now be employed as a measuring device to determine when instances of moral development have taken place. A variety of techniques can thus be tested against the Kohlberg scale to determine their efficacy in producing an increased facility in moral reasoning.

Two particular techniques employed quite often are those of the

moral dilemma and moral role-playing (the two are often combined in one exercise). An individual or entire group is challenged to take positions in a difficult moral dilemma; their manner of reasoning about the problem is then analyzed, and they are invited to assess their development according to the Kohlberg scale. This is often referred to as a form of "values clarification," inasmuch as the emphasis is not so much upon immediate change as upon gaining awareness of how one thinks at a particular time.

### ***A Cognitive Philosophical Approach***

Another strongly cognitive model is that of Immanuel Kant. In *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant argues that reason, and not other casual factors, is the only true motivating force behind ethical decision-making. This is not true of decision-making in other action-oriented disciplines, hence this is often referred to as an argument for the "autonomy of ethics." Kant argues that actions which have truly *moral* connotations are those which are motivated by *duty*, a uniquely rational form of practical necessity.

The practical necessity of acting on this principle—that is, duty—is in no way based on feelings, impulses, and inclinations, but only on the relation of rational beings to one another, a relation in which the will of a rational being must always be regarded as *making universal law*, because otherwise he could not be conceived as an end in himself.<sup>30</sup>

Man, viewed as a rational being, is an end in himself, and thus "the maker of universal law;"<sup>31</sup> Kant maintains this in the context of a complex argument interconnecting the notions of man's rationality, his freedom, and dignity. This is summed up well in the concept of *autonomy*, which implies both freedom and law-making, law-making then implying rationality. Man, as a highly dignified and rational creature, regulates himself through the operation of his own reason; it is reason (i.e., himself *qua* reasoner) and nothing else that binds him when he acts according to duty.

Such actions too need no recommendation from any subjective disposition or taste in order to meet with favour and approval; they need no immediate propensity or feeling for themselves; they exhibit the will which performs them as an object of immediate reverence; nor is anything other than reason required to *impose* them upon the will, nor to *coax* them from the will—which last would anyhow be a contradiction in the case of duties.<sup>32</sup>

Kant thus revolts against conceptions of ethical reasoning which ascribe significant causal roles to non-cognitive feelings, sentiments or attitudes; these are in essential contradiction to Kant's view of the dignity and autonomy of man.



It follows equally that this dignity (or prerogative) of his above all mere things of nature carries with it the necessity of always choosing his maxims from the point of view of himself—and also of every other rational being—as a maker of law (and this is why they are called persons).<sup>33</sup>

In order to construct a corresponding method of ethical reasoning, Kant must find some way in which reason alone can function as a determinant or motivating force of action.<sup>34</sup> To do so, he constructs a theory of ethical reasoning founded on “conformity to universal law as such.” This consists of, in essence, a test of consistency by which it is determined whether a suggested maxim could be followed through consistently (i.e., “rationally”) by a rational individual. In the various forms of the Categorical Imperative offered by Kant, this amounts to testing the “universalizability” of the maxim (which, after all, is supposed to be a “universal law”). The obligatory force of acceptable maxims comes from one’s having posited them for oneself as a well-functioning rational being (as well as from the equally necessary rational implication of one’s duty to all other rational beings as members of a kingdom of ends). The motivating force is reason, but reason in the form of a universal law posited by oneself. Hence, ultimately, the motivation for obedience to moral standards consists of one’s act of volition—but this, as opposed to Hume,<sup>35</sup> is viewed as an act rational in its very nature (it is a “rational being” that acts).

To conclude, Kant thus develops a highly cognitive view of ethics and ethical reasoning, based primarily on his image of man. While he acknowledges the role of other, non-cognitive factors on the human person (man viewed from the “point of view of the sensible world”),<sup>36</sup> he also maintains man’s capacity to transcend these influences, making spontaneous rational decisions which are self-binding. Moral reasoning consists of demonstrating, via the Categorical Imperative, that a proposed maxim is genuinely of this spontaneous and rational character, and not an expression of baser, selfish instincts.

### ***A Modified Cognitive Approach***

Like Kant, Hobbes constructs his view of moral reasoning, and his political philosophy in general, around a view of human nature and human functioning. Two factors especially stand out. First of all, Hobbes’ mechanistic psychological egoism. Life “is but a motion of Limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within;”<sup>37</sup> this principal part, or “spring” is apparently wound up for the purpose of pursuing self-interest. The will, for Hobbes, is but that which “in deliberation (is) the last appetite, or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof.”<sup>38</sup>

Thus, "the voluntary actions, and inclinations of all men, tend, not only to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life . . . of the voluntary acts of every man, the object is some *good* to himself."<sup>39</sup> The result of this is "a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death."<sup>40</sup> From this ground-level analysis of human motivation, Hobbes concludes the necessity of some absolute sovereign power, capable of enforcing peace between men otherwise equally powerful and equally self-interested, and hence in a constant state of war.

A second important facet of Hobbes' analysis of human nature is in regard to the ethical notions and values of mankind. In that Hobbes is a psychological egoist, he interprets man's moral notions and beliefs in terms of what men value as a function of their personal desires and goals. "But whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth *good*; and the object of his hate and aversion, *evil*."<sup>41</sup> "For these words of good and evil, and contemptible, are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves."<sup>42</sup> *A priori* concepts of moral good or rights are denied, as well, by Hobbes' radically empiricist and nominalist epistemology.<sup>43</sup> "Virtue," then, can only be "that which is valued," and "consisteth in comparison;"<sup>44</sup> ethics will be constructed upon what is of value to each individual, construed as being concerned only with self-interest. Aside from the value one has to himself as a human, in general "the WORTH of a man is, as of all other things, his price." It is "not absolute . . . but a thing dependent on the need and judgment of another." Human "dignity" is but a function of the "public worth of a man, which is the value set on him by the commonwealth."<sup>45</sup>

This approach is often referred to as an "economic man" view; it was this view which was often assumed by early economists for theoretical and predictive purposes. David Gauthier sums up the economic conception (uniquely suited for describing marketplace behavior) in terms of three "dogmas."<sup>46</sup> First, value is conceived of as utility, "a measure of subjective, individual preference." Secondly, rationality is contrued as maximization of utility: to be rational is to decide to act in those ways which offer the highest expected value to oneself. Thirdly, individual interests are regarded as "non-tuistic:" individuals tend to take primary interest in their *own* needs and wants, deriving utility therefrom.<sup>47</sup> On this model, rationality plays an important, but primarily instrumental or "means-end" role. Behavioral decision theory, from a psychological standpoint, has studied in considerable detail the manner in which individuals calculate costs and benefits in making utility-maximiz-

ing decisions.<sup>48</sup> Moral reasoning, on this model, is a form of calculation (a "Reconing of the consequences"—Hobbes) of the best means to essentially selfish ends. It remains for moral theorists of this stripe to demonstrate that traditionally *moral* conduct is a good means to selfish ends—a task which has proven immensely difficult over time.

\* \* \*

In this section we have considered six models of ethical reasoning, ranging on the continuum from noncognitive through highly cognitive. It might be noted that we did not consider a psychological model fitting into the "modified" category. A model conveniently classifiable according to this designation will be treated in the next section as we discuss a multidimensional attitudinal model of ethical reasoning. Before doing so, however, we note some of the strengths and weaknesses of the models just surveyed.

Noncognitive models, first of all, have their greatest strength in acknowledging the complexity of human behavior. It is simply impossible to ascribe all human conduct to disciplined rational decision-making. Not only do individuals often act inconsistently with their stated beliefs, but the very beliefs themselves are often held seemingly with no reason at all. Rather, maintenance of the beliefs may satisfy some basic internal personal need or drive, or constitute a form of defense against a perceived threat in the environment. Noncognitive models fail, however, in not paying proper respect to the extent to which humans *are* rational. As some psychologists note, the fact that humans find it necessary to "rationalize" is evidence that they want to at least appear rational; human reason-giving behavior, which is very common, is an important datum which cannot be overlooked.<sup>49</sup> Also, considerable evidence exists that individuals often reject persuasive communications which are regarded as failing to offer valid arguments, suggesting that not all values and attitudes are held as a result of solely noncognitive causes. This does not entail the "rational man" who is moved by nothing but reason, but it does imply that sizable chunks of human experience are open to rational assessment.

These weaknesses are more than made up for by cognitive theories. Those espousing a cognitive approach give reason a very strong role in moral decision-making and conduct. They do not hesitate to seek out a correct mode of moral reasoning in the hope that the kind of stalemates noncognitivists worry about can be avoided. Cognitive developmentalists account for the frequent failures of supposedly rational people to produce moral outcomes by noting, as one factor, the ontogenic stages of moral thinking. That is, moral reasoning may be a universal phenomenon, but some do it better than others. The weakness of highly cognitive approaches, however, is that they often attempt to explain too much in terms of



stages of cognitive development. It cannot be denied that noncognitive causes often interfere with the processes of rational assessment, leading to outcomes quite out of stride with one's cognitive developmental stage.<sup>50</sup> For example, one's ability to argue in a very mature way for the moral obligation to save a drowning man may not be able to overcome one's hydrophobia, operating as a strong deterrent against action. Cognitive theories have tended to suffer a certain theoretical impoverishment in regard to their ability to explain how these noncognitive factors in personality and environment interact with normally functioning cognitive processes. One thinks, for example, of Kohlberg's stages: can the ordered sequence he posits be explained totally by the development of cognitive skills? Experimental results militate strongly against this hypothesis, suggesting that other, essentially noncognitive factors also contribute to determining the level of advancement of one's ability to morally reason.<sup>51</sup>

Turning to the two modified approaches treated in the survey, we note similar advantages and shortcomings. Hume's essentially noncognitive approach is modified, as noted, in the sense that it attempts to offer "meta-reasons" for the occurrence of those noncognitive sentiments socially baptized as "moral." These sentiments are shown to have survival value, and it becomes understandable why they come to have moral connotations. However, it is difficult to move from highly speculative and generalized stories about the genesis of sentiments to specific moral judgments, as required in controversial or problematic situations. Hume's psychological characterization, though often appealing, is simply too vague; like the cognitive theories discussed above, it requires theoretical enrichment. We will attempt something of this in the next section.

A similar weakness flaws the "economic man" concept of moral reasoning. Without doubt, means-end reasoning is a common and vital aspect of human decision making; the many current applications of behavioral decision theory in business management and government attests to how many areas of human life depend upon this kind of thinking. However, it is an oversimplification to assume that *all* reasoning is of a means-end sort. In fact, humans act in response to a number of motivations, of which personal utility maximization is only one. Studies have shown, for example, that in order to reduce dissonance between beliefs, individuals will often act in ways which do not reflect maximal utility outcomes—even when they know that they could have gained those outcomes. Just as individuals do not always act to maximize their perceived utilities, so also it can be strongly disputed that individuals are non-tuistic. As Gauthier notes, it is unfortunate that "acting rationally" has come, in accord with the economic man model, to be equated with "doing what is in your self interest" (whatever the ef-

fects may be on others). It is the "individualistic" bias so characteristic of Western liberal humanism which has evoked sharp criticism from Marxist theorists, who argue that there is no such thing as a "rational" disregard for one's fellow man.<sup>52</sup>

## II. Attitudes and Moral Reasoning

In order to shed additional light on the nature and scope of moral reasoning, we turn to one of the most important areas of research in the field of social psychology—that of attitude theory. The concept of "attitude" has been central to social psychology since it was emphasized in Thomas and Znaniecki's seminal study, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1913).<sup>53</sup> The concept initially stood for a "physical positioning" of an object with respect to a background. German theorists at the turn of the century experimented with attitudes and psychophysical "sets" or states of readiness involving muscular preparations for action. Later, the term came to have a more subjective connotation (e.g., in Thomas and Znaniecki's study), having to do with a subject's mental positioning of an object in regard to himself, his values and world, especially in the sense that it prepares him for action in regard to the object, event or person. Gordon Allport, after noting the difficulty of defining the concept (and considering over 100 possibilities!) arrives at the following definition:

An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a direct or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related.<sup>54</sup>

This definition has come to be widely accepted.

One reason for these many interpretations of attitude is that it is a purposely multidimensional construct. Katz and Stotland, in an important functional analysis of attitudes, note this peculiar but positive attribute:

Efforts to deal with the real world show our need for a concept more flexible and more covert than habit, more specifically oriented to social objects than personality traits, less global than value systems, more directive than beliefs, and more ideational than motive pattern.<sup>55</sup>

The weakness of the concept of attitude turns out to be its greatest strength: it is a construct which serves the purpose of unifying several different kinds of phenomena occurring in the personality structure and social life under the heading of one theoretical variable.

The three "components" most commonly ascribed to attitudes are



cognition (knowing), affect (feelings) and behavior (intentions, actions, or what is traditionally called "connotation").<sup>56</sup> This is a division of the personality which goes back at least to Plato, and has a rich and variegated history. Attitudes are postulated, on this model, as unified theoretical constructs which systematically integrate these three functions. Considerable attention to the processes which make for this integration has come from the "cognitive consistency" branch of attitudinal theory.<sup>57</sup> Cognitive consistency theorists have noted the tendency of individuals to seek consistency (i.e., to reduce dissonances or incongruities) between their beliefs, feelings and actions in regard to an object or set of related objects, events or persons. While logicians have for centuries been concerned with the preservation of consistency between beliefs, cognitive consistency theorists, as social psychologists, extend this interest to the study of the relationship between feelings, behavior and beliefs, especially as they are manifested in social contexts. It is this school which has done the most to popularize the multidimensional concept of attitude. Thus "attitude" becomes a convenient theoretical arena within which to seek to specify the influences and processes involved in the interrelating of the three components. In what follows we will consider a specific attitudinal model of these processes advocated by cognitive consistency theorist Milton J. Rosenberg. We will suggest that this has considerable value for understanding the phenomenon of moral reasoning.

### *An Attitudinal Model*

Rosenberg describes his model as an "affective-cognitive consistency theory."<sup>58</sup> This is because it concentrates primarily on the relationship between those higher order cognitive processes which constitute belief systems, and the influence of the individual's affective coloring of his world. Rosenberg also refers to his theory as a system of "symbolic psycho-logic." Psychologic involves the rules of inference commonly employed by those processing affectively-loaded subject matter.<sup>59</sup> These rules, as Rosenberg notes, might be "mortifying to the logician," but as interpreted according to the cognitive consistency model, turn out to have a logicity peculiarly their own. Rosenberg's approach has received some rigorous testing (e.g., in his well-known collaboration with Carl Abelson in the "Fenwick studies"<sup>60</sup> on interpersonal balance), and has received continuing modification and refinement since its initial formulation in the late 1950s. The theory is best described by means of a metaphor Rosenberg employs in a summarizing article.<sup>61</sup>

First, one begins by picturing a finite but vast space called the "attitudinal cognitorium" or "attitude universe." Within this space

are located hundreds or probably thousands of object-concepts, each being a verbal or symbolic representation of a person, institution, policy, place, event, value standard (or ideal), or any other distinct "thing" which when psychologically encountered, elicits some fairly stable magnitude of either positive or negative evaluative affect. Rosenberg suggests that each of these object-concepts might be represented by a small metal disk. Between these many disks, trying them together, run strings which are thin or thick, red or green. Thick strings suggest strong ties between two object-concepts—strong, that is, as perceived by the self, not necessarily as they may be in reality. Thin strings connote more accidental or superficial ties, most likely having little to do with the internal constitution of the two interconnected objects. Some disks are not tied together at all. Red strings stand for negative or disjunctive relations, of the sort that might be conveyed by the terms 'opposes,' 'prevents,' 'dislikes,' 'stays away from,' etc. Rosenberg seems to have in mind here a semi-conceptual and semi-affective relationship. Previous theorists (e.g., Fritz Heider) distinguished between "sentiment relations," linked by common feelings, and "unit relations" which involve factual or conceptual connections perceived to exist between two objects. The latter are presumed to be affectively neutral, while the former are affectively loaded. Rosenberg treats these as one, so that red strings in general appear to indicate one's inability (or unwillingness) to think of two things as being together, for either cognitive or affective reasons. They are psychologically in tension. Green strings, on the other hand, indicate a positive or "conjunctive" relationship, as conveyed by such terms as 'supports,' 'facilitates,' 'likes,' 'helps' and 'is part of.'

In an individual's attitudinal universe, then, any given disk is tied by red strings to some objects and green strings to others. Rosenberg gives as an example such objects as 'air pollution,' 'Chicago Blackhawks,' 'bituminous coal,' 'the romantic tradition,' 'Gustav Mahler,' 'Senator Fulbright' and 'my son.' No string appears to tie 'Gustav Mahler' to 'Senator Fulbright' or 'the Chicago Blackhawks.' However, the disk "Fulbright" is connected by a strong red thread to "Vietnam War" and a thinner red string to 'air pollution.' Between 'air pollution' (an effectively negative object) and 'bituminous coal' exists a strong green thread, especially where the individual's experience has been in a coal-burning city which is highly polluted. Similar connections can be imagined for all of the disks mentioned. Imagining the whole array of thousands of disks complexly interconnected, one would expect to see like-signed objects most often connected by green strings, while unlike signed objects are most often connected by red strings. This would be the case to the extent that the individual is consistent in his attitudes. Disks would be connected directly to only a few other disks

(disks often being arrayed in the form of overlapping clusters), while indirectly to hundreds of others.

This picture enables Rosenberg to offer a metaphorical characterization of an "attitude." Imagining the entire interconnected system of disks arrayed upon a vast floor, we can imagine the effect of lifting up one disk a few feet from the surface. The result would be the lifting up of other disks—those directly connected, as well as a periphery of more intermediately connected items. Those disks which are lifted from the surface constitute an attitude, where the center disk (the one used to lift up the cluster) is the attitude object. Thus attitudes are regarded, metaphorically, as "radial structures" uniting an object to other object-concepts with a high degree of affective-cognitive consistency or at least interrelatedness (as connoted by the presence of the red and green strings). Lifting up one object disk will bring to one's attention other disks towards which one will feel either positive or negative affect, depending upon their red-stringed or green-stringed relations to the attitude object. We note that these relations are those conceived of as existing by the subject. They may or may not correspond to actual relations in the world, or conform to the standards of logical consistency. It is also important to observe that the disks occur in often highly organized clusters. Larger clusters, having broad organizational implications for the entire attitude universe, may be classified in two ways:

1. World-views or belief-systems:
  - (a) threads primarily designate perceived conceptual or factual relations
  - (b) the affective loading of the disks is not the preeminent factor in the threading process, though it may have *some* import
  - (c) the attitude cluster is lifted up for analysis purposes, rather than for affectively evaluating an object or action
2. Value systems:
  - (a) threads often (though not always) designate affective connections
  - (b) affective loading of disks is of great importance
  - (c) lifting out of the attitude cluster is often for the purpose of deciding about the affect sign of an object or action<sup>62</sup>

These two classifications do not constitute a strict dichotomy. Affect and cognition, beliefs and value systems often interact (hence the ambiguity as to the affective-cognitive nature of the red and green threads). Studies on ethnocentrism, for example, have demonstrated that in many cases one's beliefs about another ethnic group (conceptual red and green threads tying the concept of the ethnic group to other factors, such as stereotypic qualities) play an important role in determining one's attitude towards that group.



This is in marked contrast to both the cognitive and noncognitivist stances towards human reasoning and its functioning.

Rosenberg develops the model we have described in the interest of understanding the psychodynamics involved in an individual's quest for consistency on various kinds of salient issues.<sup>63</sup> We are concerned, however, with attitudinal thinking directed at moral questions, and seek a characterization of such thinking as it involves both belief and value systems. In the next two sections, we will attempt to bring the model into clearer focus, examining (1) particular types of attitudes as characterized by their functional role in the life of the individual, and (2) cognitive styles, expressing particular configurations or "threads and disks" in an individual's attitude universe. Though attitudes have been examined from many conceptual and experimental angles, we suggest that these two aspects will be especially helpful in applying our model to moral reasoning.

### **III. Determination, Functions and Types of Attitudes**

Most contemporary personality theorists agree that there is no one unitary drive or homogeneous activation state which accounts for all facets of human thinking and behavior.<sup>64</sup> Individuals are driven and motivated by a number of needs, appetites, wishes, intentions and goals varying in intensity, continuity, control by the individual, and openness to conscious awareness and cognitive processing. William J. McGuire<sup>65</sup> lists the following factors which have come to be widely accepted as significant determinants of attitudes: genetic factors (e.g., innate personality characteristics, IQ and, if the sociobiologists are right, genetically inbred instincts such as altruism), physiological factors (sex, age, physical illnesses, drug-induced effects), direct experience with stimulus objects (single traumatic incidents or repeated observations), total institutions (socializing environments—in general, group influences—tending to impart internalizable programs to the individual) and social communications (especially those ostensible offering cognitive support for a position). In acknowledging these many determinants, attitude researchers have traditionally sought to sidestep the "nature-nurture" debate; they suggest that attitudes are often a function of both acquired dispositions and "built-in" functional tendencies.

Attitudes, then, are not "windowless monads," nor even one-window affairs. This openness to multiple influences strongly suggests that attitudes may serve a number of functions in the individual. Katz and Stotland, outlining a general theory of attitudes, discuss three basic types of motive patterns which are instrumental to the

satisfaction of many of the individual's needs.<sup>66</sup> As motive patterns are important in functionally shaping the structure and direction of the attitudes which they generate, in our discussion we will equate motive patterns with the attitude types which result from them. The three motive patterns are (1) proximal attitudes, (2) object-instrumental attitudes, and (3) ego-instrumental or ego-defensive attitudes.

*Proximal attitudes* are attitudes towards objects regarded as having intrinsic value (i.e., which satisfy needs and wants directly). In this case, attitude objects are "consummatory with regard to psychological gratification." Examples are foods found agreeable to the taste, or the sports car which gives a sense of power and control to the driver. The ability of such objects to satisfy needs determines their "functional value." Katz and Stotland suggest that the intensity of affective evaluative qualities (our tendency to call it "good" or "bad") in the object may vary with such factors as how readily or easily it is satisfied, and the tendency of one's group to evaluate the object.

A second kind of motive pattern-satisfying attitude is the *object-instrumental* type. Such attitudes reflect the "lengthy and sometimes circuitous pathways" involved in satisfying a motive in a complex society characterized by scarcities.<sup>67</sup> In this case, the individual favorably evaluates attitude objects due to their perceived instrumental value in attaining his goals. Object-instrumental attitudes usually have a heavily cognitive character due to the need to justify the delay and frustration involved in indirectly consummating valued ends; also a certain cognitive "bolstering" is required to justify one means to the end over others.<sup>68</sup>

A third type of attitude is the *ego-instrumental* or *ego-defensive* type. This plays the role of helping an individual to maintain his conception of himself as a certain kind of person. Verbally expressing these attitudes indicates to others the kind of person one is. Whereas in the case of proximal attitudes, the object was gratifying, and for object-instrumental attitudes, the goal served this purpose, in this case ego-satisfactions provide the attitude with affective thrust. As Katz and Stotland note, two purposes are served by this kind of attitude.

Ego-defensive attitudes protect the ego but their expression also gives the individual direct satisfaction. The person who projects his own hostilities onto other people and then attacks these hostile people satisfies two purposes. Projecting his aggression protects his self-image from a recognition of undesirable qualities. Expressing the aggression gives cathartic release.<sup>69</sup>

McGuire, offering a similar functionally-defined list of attitude-types, distinguishes between the two functions of *ego-defense* and



*self-realization/expression*.<sup>70</sup> He also adds another major function—that of forming attitudes as organizing devices for knowledge purposes.<sup>71</sup> This kind of attitude may involve no affective loading or motive satisfaction except that gained from the sheer enjoyment of investigative curiosity or the “love of wisdom.” We will refer to these as “*cognitive-explorative attitudes*.”

### ***Attitude Determinants and Moral Reasoning***

Interesting correlations between these attitude types and the theoretical approaches to moral reasoning discussed in Section I spring immediately to mind. Proximal attitudes, for example, sound strikingly similar to Hume’s “sentiments found immediately agreeable.” Object-instrumental attitudes correlate with economic conceptions of reasoning, wherein good reasoning is equated with the evaluation of choices yielding maximal expected utility. Self-expressive attitudes might be compared to ethical intuitionist approaches (not surveyed in Section I), which emphasize self-defining moral properties which are phenomenologically identified. Also, Kohlberg’s approach, with its emphasis upon “post-conventional” autonomy, seems to imply a high degree of self-realization, hopefully leading to the increased ability to approach others emphatically. Finally, cognitive-explorative attitudes resemble highly cognitive approaches, in which ethical norms and duties tend to be transcendentalized, abstracted or eternalized. Are these just playful comparisons, or do they indicate an important relationship?

We suggest that these correlations are of high, but not grandiose significance. On the one hand, they tend to affirm the psychological foundations which support a number of the theoretical approaches surveyed in Section I. Each theory appears to reflect something of the motivational patterns present in most individuals. However, inasmuch as attitudes may serve a multitude of functions, it is unclear why those representing any one motivational need pattern should be preferred to all of the others. Object-instrumental attitudes, as expressed in utility-oriented means-end thinking, accomplish important adaptive goals in human functioning. Self-expressive attitudes, though, are also vital, facilitating the cathartic release of tensions and encouraging growth in self-understanding and expression. Why should one type of reasoning be preferred over the other? If anything, it is the situation which often forces us to make such normative distinctions. It would be poor timing to seek to satisfy the love of wisdom when faced with an adaptive crisis requiring an accurate and quick cost-benefit analysis of outcomes.

This has interesting implications for our questions about the degree of cognitivity of ethical reasoning. If ethical reasoning is defined according to any one type of attitudinal thinking, then we

can expect that humans will not turn out to be exhaustively rational. This is because, as we have seen, no type of attitudinal thinking captures the entirety of the human motivational picture. The question as to the extent to which individuals can increase in their rational capacities would be answered by two considerations. First, as Kohlberg points out, this is a question of developmental growth in cognitive skills. But secondly, it would involve shifting an individual's patterns of need satisfaction, so that he might prefer one type of attitudinal thinking to another. A person who is highly proximal in the way he maintains attitudes is one primarily motivated by immediate gratifications.<sup>72</sup> Moral reasoning development for such an individual might consist of introducing him to the more varied and lasting kinds of gratification which result from object-instrumental, self-expressive or explorative attitudinal thinking. Such has been the goal of educators since the dawn of time. To some degree this can be accomplished through appeal to cognitive considerations ("if you keep doing this, here is where it will lead you!"). On the other hand, heavy investment in proximal need satisfaction may indicate a psychological impairment of other functions due to low esteem and a pattern of frustrated object-instrumental attempts.<sup>73</sup> Addressing these problems would appear to be essential to the further development of applied reasoning capacities in such individuals. Various therapeutic methodologies—some highly cognitive—are possible avenue at this point.

How cognitive *should* moral decision-making be? This has generally been asked in reaction to those seeking to maximize either object-instrumental or cognitive explorative types of thinking. Object-instrumentalists are hence regarded as being "beady-eyed" or "cold and unsympathizing," while cognitive-explorationists are said to reside in distant ivory towers. The problem here seems to be one of determining *when* it is proper to act out the more cognitive attitude functions. Means-ends type thinking seems poorly suited if one's task is the discernment within one's heart of whether a motive is a selfish one. A self-expressive attitude would better serve the purposes, involving as it does an intuitionistic type of reasoning. An important philosophical project (which we will not attempt in this paper) would be to determine the conditions specifying the applicability of each moral reasoning approach. When is it right to be a means-end thinker? When is it right to abstract moral questions from specific situations? Recognizing that moral reasoning approaches reflect a variety of attitudinal functions (all of which are *sometimes* beneficial ones) casts questions about the cognitivity of moral decision-making in an entirely different light.

One final application of our study of attitude types has to do with moral reasoning and ego-defensive attitudes. Among the five kinds of attitude types, ego-defense is most often associated with insuffi-

cient and self-defeating kinds of behavior. Though some degree of defensiveness is necessary for any person on this side of heaven's gates, heavy indulgence in ego-defense is not seen as a healthy psychological orientation. It is "irrational" in the sense that it does not serve the long range purposes of the individual. To use Fromm's terminology, it is a "nonproductive orientation."<sup>74</sup> Here a normative concept of "good functioning" crosses paths with the psychological description of a type of attitude. Were we able to identify forms of moral reasoning with this type of attitude, we might have the privilege of making normative distinctions based on the study of attitudes.

But this leads us to questions of attitudinal structure. Ego-defensive reasoning can of course be identified by its self-justificatory and others-condemning character. But moral reasoning expressive of ego-defensive attitudes appears to cross theoretical lines: one may be a defensive utilitarian or a defensive deontologist. Only a more fine-grained analysis will reveal the difference between overly defensive versus relatively undefensive ethical reasoning. To this we turn.

#### IV. Cognitive Styles and Moral Reasoning

Another aspect of attitude research may bear more fruit in our attempt to make normative distinctions. One of the motivations behind the development of twentieth century social psychology has been to understand the thinking styles of those who are regarded (via an *a priori* normative judgment) as causing problems for society. Two particular targets of this investigation are criminals and bigots. Many interesting psychological portraits of "the criminal mind" exist; unfortunately, many of these conflict, and the success rate of treatment in connection with these diagnoses has been dismally low. On the other hand, psychological characterizations of the "cognitive styles" of racial and ethnic bigots have achieved relatively wide acceptance and agreement.<sup>75</sup> In addition, some success has been reported in reeducation and attitude change of these personality types. Thus, we will concentrate on this latter type, as illustrative of cognitive styles which are regarded as being both normatively unacceptable and (though not in a strictly pathological sense) psychologically unhealthy and undesirable.

Cognitive styles have been described by means of a number of hypothesized dimensions. One of the most famous is Milton Rokeach's "open and closed mind." The following statement is representative of Rokeach's findings:

Some major findings that come out of such studies are that persons who are high in ethnic prejudice and/or authoritarianism, as



compared with persons who are low, are more rigid in their problem-solving behavior, more concrete in their thinking, and more narrow in their grasp of a particular subject; they also have a greater tendency to premature closure in their perceptual processes and to distortions in memory, and a greater tendency to be intolerant of ambiguity.<sup>76</sup>

Other such structural characteristics expressing themselves in cognitive styles are the "authoritarian personality," the others-directed conformist, the undifferentiated or field-dependent thinker, and those with "low latitudes of acceptance," high measures of concreteness, minimal category width, and a relative inability to distinguish source from concept. Whether these may someday be reduced to some one essential variable, they all represent structural properties affecting reasoning styles which have been found to correlate with undesirable or normatively unacceptable personality types. It will be noted that this is similar to Kohlberg's approach, except that it descends one theoretical level deeper into attitudinal processes in order to explain *why* an individual reasons as he does.

Moral reasoning approaches which are unsatisfactory are, as we have noted, characterized by peculiar cognitive organizations. Employing our section II model, we might describe them as consisting of a number of affectively-loaded clusters. The clusters tend to be relatively limited in size (low category width), have extremely well-defined boundaries (concreteness) and are either quite detached from each other or separated by red threads.<sup>78</sup> Each cluster is characterized by a high degree of internal consistency (low differentiation). This consistency, however, is most often achieved by coupling like-signed disks. Where threads run between disks, they are usually green ones, and they stand for affective, as opposed to factual relations. Most of the disks are attached to the self-concept by such threads. This suggests that attitude objects are evaluated based upon their perceived consistency with the self-image. Degree or ego-involvement would determine the intensity of affective reaction to the object. Where self-image needs support, attitude objects perceived of as agreeing with and likable to the individual are strongly knit to one by positive relations. "Enemies" to the self or to perceived friends and allies are distanced by red threads in accord with the strategies of ego defense. Consistency is maintained primarily by like-signedness, rather than by means of logical-conceptual relations. As a result, many logical inconsistencies may exist, hidden by the seeming consistency of affective ties. Finally, such systems are characterized by swift and radical change. Should an important element in a cluster be perceived as changing sign, an entire cluster might immediately suffer disgrace, or be raised to a position of honor.



This model corresponds nicely to some of the results of cognitive developmental theory. Developmentalists are concerned to increase such factors as the individual's willingness to seek his own standards (autonomy), the ability to appreciate subtle differences in situations, consistency, the ability to think consequentially, and the inclination and capacity to empathize. All of these are affected by one's attitudinal structure. Tightly knit clusters having extreme affective significance (due to heavy ego-involvement and defensiveness) discourage one from taking risks in one's thinking, as this would be to "go out on one's own" without the protection of one's clustered attitude objects. Subtleties in general cannot be perceived in an attitude system which insists on placing every attitude object in strongly homogenous positive or negative clusters. Consistency and consequential thinking are both affected by the preference for affective over conceptual and factual ties between objects. Those perceived as favorable will often be attached by green threads, even when the facts or logic indicate that red threads should be placed. Finally, empathic skills are limited by (a) the tendency to classify as positive or negative, and (b) inability to make imaginative leaps (via "principles") to unclustered attitude objects. Often, foreign alien objects are automatically classified as unfavorable unless direct experience of them as nonthreatening or favorable takes place.

How can such thinking be changed? In terms of our model, this might mean rearranging clusters attitudinally into less of a black and white pattern through (a) eliminating false relations between objects based on incorrect beliefs, (b) eliminating the number of relations between objects established purely on the basis of like-signed affective loading, and (c) establishing new, differentiated clusters of attitudes through introducing new relationships between previously unconnected disks. Both (a) and (c) involve primarily cognitive readjustments, which might be done through classroom exercises and educational experiences. However, (b) is more difficult, inasmuch as the tendency to build affectively similar clusters is often an expression of ego-defense, unresolved conflicts, insecurity and poor self-image, etc. Unless these functional determinants are treated, perhaps through counseling, the motivation to continue building such structures will wipe out any temporary readjustments.

### *Summary*

Our treatment of cognitive styles suggests another approach to distinguishing between methods of ethical reasoning. On the other hand, there is the theoretical approach (cf. Section I). We have suggested (Section III) that one's preference for a theoretical ap-

proach may vary according to the function its correlative type of attitudinal thinking plays for him in terms of his motivations, needs, and situational requirements. This is regrettably simplistic, but at least illustrates the point that unqualified appeal to any one motive in human nature will not suffice to establish the correct ethical theory.

Our second approach is rooted in a concept of "rationality" as psychological good-functioning. We described cognitive organizations which are not regarded as products of a well-functioning personality, and attempted to suggest styles of reasoning behavior which would tend to characterize these structures. This approach helps little in choosing between ethical theories (one can be an open or closed-minded utilitarian just as much as an intuitionist); a preponderance of ego-defensive attitudes, as expressed in unhealthy cognitive styles, interferes equally with all other basic functions of the personality, and any of the ethical theories may be put to a devious if inconsistent use. Analysis of moral reasoning in terms of cognitive styles is helpful in theoretically identifying the causes of aberrated moral reasoning. It also identifies in what respect this kind of reasoning is "irrational" and how, in general, it might be remedied.

The philosophical ramifications of this approach have only been hinted at in this paper; no one has yet constructed a "calculus of cognitive styles." Yet it appears that, from a psychological perspective, moral reasoning can be evaluated on the attitudinal level in terms of good and bad cognitive structuring. The philosophical counterpart to this kind of analysis is, hopefully, waiting in the wings.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>For a recent discussion of the task of the moral philosopher: William D. Boyce, Larry Cyril Jensen, *Moral Reasoning* (Lincoln, Nebraska: U. of Nebraska Press, 1978), part I.

<sup>2</sup>*Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Joan Riviere (N.Y.: Pocket Books, 1953 edition), pp. 26-7.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Donn Byrne, *An Introduction to Personality* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), chapter two.

<sup>4</sup>For a psychoanalytic treatment more concerned with cognitive issues, cf. Irving Sarnoff, "Psychoanalytic Theory and Cognitive Dissonance" in *Theories of Cognitive Consistency: A Sourcebook*, edited by Robert P. Abelson, Elliot Aronson, William J. McGuire, Theodore M. Newcomb, Milton J. Rosenberg, Percy H. Tannenbaum (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1968), pp. 192-f. (Note: we shall hereafter refer to this volume as 'Sourcebook').

<sup>5</sup>Charles Leslie Stevenson, "The Nature of Ethical Disagreement," in Richard Brandt, editor, *Value and Obligation* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), p. 371.

<sup>6</sup>Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1944), pp. 20-36. This approach is commonly referred to as "emotivism."

<sup>7</sup>Stuart Chase, "The Criteria of Semantics," *Saturday Review*, Volume 28, No. 23, (June 9, 1945), p. 17.

<sup>8</sup>Stevenson, in Brandt, p. 373.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 374. David Hume (cf. *infra*) makes similar statements.

<sup>13</sup>David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by L.A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1978 edition), p. 456.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 457.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 472; cf. pp. 471, 574.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 496.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 575.

<sup>18</sup>David Hume, *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, edited by L.A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1975 edition), pp. 250-267.

<sup>19</sup>Hume, *Treatise*, p. 462.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 458; cf. p. 463.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 459; cf. p. 416.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 462, italics *mind*.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>24</sup>For an excellent introduction with an extensive bibliography: Boyce and Jenson, *op.cit.*, part II. Also, Thomas Lickons, editor, *Moral Development and Behavior* (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), and W. Kurtines, and E.B. Greif, "The Development of Moral Thought: Review and Evaluation of Kohlberg's Approach," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 81 (1974): pp. 453-470. Amongst the many works by Kohlberg, one might begin with "Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Socialization," in D. Goslin, editor, *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research* (Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1969).

<sup>25</sup>cf. the *Psychological Bulletin* article cited in the previous note, and another: Augusto Blasi, "Bridging Moral Cognition and Moral Action: A Critical Review of the Literature," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 88 (1980), pp. 1-f.

<sup>26</sup>cf. Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgement of the Child* N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1932).



<sup>27</sup>cf. Blasi, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>28</sup>Kohlberg's scheme of stages, in simple form, is as follows:

Level I—Preconventional

Stage one—heteronomous morality

Stage two—individualism, instrumental purpose and exchange

Level II—Conventional

Stage three—mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, conformity

Stage four—social system and conscience

Level III—Postconventional or Principled

Stage five—social contract or utility and individual rights

Stage six—universal ethical principles

(cf. Lawrence Kohlberg, "Moral Stages and Moralization: The Cognitive-Developmental Approach," in Lickona, ed., op. cit., pp. 31-53).

<sup>29</sup>Blasi, op. cit., cites many favorable studies; for critical responses, cf., Kurtines and Greif, op. cit.; also, Jack R. Fraenkel, "The Kohlberg Bandwagon: Some Reservations," *Social Education* (April, 1976): pp. 216-222.

<sup>30</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. by H.J. Paton (N.Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1964 edition), pp. 101-2.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 102-3.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-6.

<sup>34</sup>This is in many ways an answer to the challenge of Hume, as indicated in this statement from the *Treatise* (p. 463, op. cit.):

There has been an opinion very industriously propagated by certain philosophers, that morality is susceptible of demonstration; and tho' no one has ever been able to advance a single step in those demonstrations; yet 'tis taken for granted, that this science may be brought to an equal certainty with geometry or algebra. Upon this supposition, vice and virtue must consist in some relations; since 'tis allowed on all hands, that no matter of fact is capable of being demonstrated. Let us, therefore, begin with examining this hypothesis, and endeavor, if possible, to fix those moral qualities which have been so long the objects of our fruitless researches. Point out distinctly the relations, which constitute morality or obligation, that we may know wherein they consist, and after what manner we must judge them.

<sup>35</sup>cf. Hume, *Treatise*, p. 458.

<sup>36</sup>Kant, pp. 119-120.

<sup>37</sup>Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by Michael Oakeshott (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1962), p. 19.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 80, 105.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 48. Hume makes similar statements.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-9.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., cf. pp. 21, 35.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>46</sup>David Gauthier, "Thomas Hobbes: Moral Theorist," *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 76 (October, 1979), pp. 547-8.

<sup>47</sup>This third "dogma" is not universally held. Utilitarians (e.g., Mill) would deny it, substituting for *one's own* utility the "greatest happiness of the greatest number."

<sup>48</sup>cf. Hillel J. Einhorn, Robin M. Hogarth, "Behavioral Decision Theory: Processes of Judgement and Choice," *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 32 (1981): pp. 53-88.

<sup>49</sup>cf. David Krech, Richard S. Crutchfield, *Theory and Problems of Social Psychology* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1948), pp. 168-9.

<sup>50</sup>An example is the observation by Murphy, Murphy, and Newcomb in *Experimental Social Psychology* (N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1938 revised edition) pp. 1031-3: "Evidence abounds . . . to suggest that the most freakish assortments of opinions and beliefs are commonly held by single individuals. The prevalence of irrational beliefs, even among those at college levels, has more than once been amply demonstrated . . . 'Rational' and 'irrational ideas' may evidently be the best of bedfellows." This issue is discussed at some length by Jonathan L. Freedman, "How Important is Cognitive Consistency?" in *Sourcebook*, op. cit., pp. 497-503.

<sup>51</sup>This was strongly pointed out by J.W. Brehm, A.R. Cohen, *Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance* (N.Y.: Wiley, 1962); cf. also David C. Glass, "Individual Differences and the Resolution of Cognitive Inconsistencies," in *Sourcebook*, op. cit. pp. 615-623.

<sup>52</sup>Gauthier, op. cit. pp. 547- fig. cf. also Arthur E. Murphy, "The Context of Moral Judgment," in *The Uses of Reason* (N.Y.: MacMillan Co., 1943), p. 128.

<sup>53</sup>Two excellent histories and conceptual overviews of "attitude" are: Thomas M. Ostram, "The Emergence of Attitude Theory: 1930-1950," in *Psychological Foundations of Attitudes*, edited by Anthony G. Greenwald, Timothy C. Brock, Thomas M. Ostram (N.Y.: Academic Press, 1968), pp. 1-32; and Melvin L. DeFleur, Frank R. Westie, "Attitude as a Scientific Concept," in Allen P. Liska, *The Consistency Controversy* (N.Y.: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), pp. 23-43. A collection of essays most important to attitude theory is Martin Fishbein, ed., *Readings in Attitude Theory and Measurement* (N.Y.: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), while a recent survey of current research is: Robert B. Cialdini, Richard E. Petty, John T. Cacioppo, "Attitude and Attitude Change," *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 32 (1981): pp. 357-404.

<sup>54</sup>Gordon W. Allport, "Attitudes," in *Handbook of Social Psychology*, edited C. Murchison (Worcester, Mass: Clark U. Press, 1935), pp. 808-9.

<sup>55</sup>Daniel Katz, Ezra Stotland, "Preliminary Statement to a Theory of Attitudes," in S. Koch, editor, *Psychology: Study of a Science*, Vol. III (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 466.

<sup>56</sup>A number of different kinds of studies supporting this claim are discussed in M.J. Rosenberg, "An Analysis of Affective-Cognitive Consistency,"

in M.J. Rosenberg, C.I. Hovland, W.J. McGuire, R.P. Abelson, J.W. Brehm, *Attitude Organization and Change* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1960), pp. 15-64.

<sup>57</sup>A number of excellent overviews and collections of critical essays on this approach to attitude theory are available. A few are: *Sourcebook*, op. cit.; R. Brown, "Models of Attitude Change," in R. Brown, E. Galanter, B.H. Hess, G. Mandler, editors, *New Directions in Psychology* (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), pp. 1-85; Shel Feldman, *Cognitive Consistency; Motivational Antecedents and Behavioral Consequents* (N.Y.: Academic Press, 1966); R. Zajonc, "Cognitive Theories of Social Behavior," in G. Lindzey E. Aronson, editors, *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1968 edition), Vol. I, pp. 320-410.

<sup>58</sup>Rosenberg, "An Analysis of Affective-Cognitive Consistency," op. cit.

<sup>59</sup>R.P. Abelson, M.J. Rosenberg, "Symbolic Psycho-logic: A Model of Attitudinal Cognition," *Behavioral Science*, Vol. 3 (1958): pp. 1-13.

<sup>60</sup>M.J. Rosenberg, R.P. Abelson, "An Analysis of Cognitive Balancing," in *Attitude Organization and Change*, op. cit., pp. 112-163.

<sup>61</sup>The following description is generously extracted from M.J. Rosenberg, "Hedonism, Inauthenticity, and Other Goads Toward Expansion of a Consistency Theory," in *Sourcebook*, op. cit., especially pp. 79-80.

<sup>62</sup>This is somewhat similar to the approach to value systems taken by Katz and Stotland, op. cit., pp. 432-4.

<sup>63</sup>cf. Rosenberg, "Hedonism, Inauthenticity, and Other Goads Toward Expansion of a Consistency Theory," in *Sourcebook*, p. 81.

<sup>64</sup>This point is made strongly in Leonard Berkowitz, "The Motivational Status of Cognitive Consistency Theory," in *Sourcebook*, pp. 303-310.

<sup>65</sup>W.J. McGuire, "The Nature of Attitudes and Attitude Change," in *Handbook of Social Psychology*, revised edition, Vol. III, pp. 159-169.

<sup>66</sup>Katz and Stotland, op. cit., pp. 436-f.

<sup>67</sup>Hume makes this same point when accounting for the need for a concept of justice in the *Enquiries*, op. cit., pp. 183-192 (sect. III, pt. 2).

<sup>68</sup>cf. R.P. Abelson, "Modes of Resolution of Belief Dilemmas," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 3 (1959), pp. 343-352.

<sup>69</sup>Katz and Stotland, op. cit. p. 440.

<sup>70</sup>McGuire, op. cit., pp. 157-8.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 156-7. McGuire refers to this as an "economy" function, but the term seems ill-suited, as it is easily mixed up with what he calls "utilitarian" functions, which more closely approximate the traditional sense of "economic."

<sup>72</sup>Studies on altruism, moral development and the delay of gratification are discussed in Donn Byrne, *An Introduction to Personality* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974 edition), pp. 478-f.

<sup>73</sup>A number of theorists have examined the variables of self-esteem and ego-involvement in the judgement process; e.g., M. Sherif, H. Cantril, *The Psychology of Ego-Involvements* (N.Y.: Wiley, 1947).



<sup>74</sup>Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Books, 1947), pp. 70-88.

<sup>75</sup>On cognitive styles: David Rapaport, "Cognitive Structures," in *Contemporary Approaches to Cognition* (Harvard U. Press, 1957), pp. 159-f; cf. also Zajonc, op. cit., pp. 332-5 discusses various classifications of cognitive structure, but questions (335) the connection of structure-types with styles of functioning.

<sup>76</sup>Milton Rokeach, *The Open and Closed Mind: Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1960), p. 16.

<sup>77</sup>An important exception to this is a belief-system characterized by the presence of an *ideology*. Ideologies are generally tightly knit, but broad ranging belief systems in the service of an institution or cause. Unlike the cluster effect we have been describing, an ideological cognitive structure would be characterized by widespread symmetries. However, the tendency to establish these symmetries on the basis of like-signedness of objects, rather than well-supported factual relationships places ideological thinking in the same class with the kind of "close minded" thinking we have been discussing.

# BIBLICAL FEMINISM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT: A REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

by Jerry R. Flora

"The woman question" surfaced among evangelical Christians in the U.S. during the 1970s. Prompted to some extent by the women's liberation movement, some leaders in the conservative wing of Protestantism took a new look at biblical teaching on the roles of men and women in home, church, and society. Questions of singleness, marriage, divorce, remarriage, headship, submission, and ordination would not be silenced. As usual, the situation tended to polarize, this time between the traditionalists and the feminists.

Traditionalists tend to emphasize the differences between male and female in creation, in the church, and at home, with the female assuming a place of submission marked chiefly by motherhood at home, missionary service, music, and children in the church, and with male leadership in both places. Feminists, on the other hand, are by definition those who support "woman's claims to be given rights, opportunities, and treatment equal to those of men" (*Oxford American Dictionary*). In the church some have divided the latter group into Christian feminists and biblical feminists. The former are those having any allegiance to the Christian faith that influences their thinking (e.g., Mary Daly, Rosemary Ruether, Dorothee Soelle), while biblical feminists are those who consider the Christian Scriptures to be the divinely inspired Word of God having final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

During the 1970s biblical feminists published three nationally noted books advancing their views: *All We're Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation*, by Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty (Word Books, 1974, 255 pp.); *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View*, by Paul K. Jewett (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975, 200 pp.); and *Women, Men, and the Bible*, by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott (Abingdon Press, 1977, 142 pp.).

Several other volumes were published during the 1970s which interacted directly or indirectly with the biblical feminists. The purpose of this article is to offer a review of four exegetically informed works together with some methodological considerations.

## GEORGE W. KNIGHT III (1977)

*The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women* (Baker Book House, 1977, 76 pp.) is a brief, tightly

written exegetical treatment growing out of several items composed between 1972 and 1977. The author, George W. Knight III, professor of New Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary, holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Westminster Theological Seminary and earned the doctorate from the Free University of Amsterdam. His work shows the careful, detailed approach for which Reformed scholarship is justly famous.

Sandwiched between introductory and concluding chapters are the book's two central sections: "Submission and Headship in Marriage" (10 pages) and "Submission and Headship in the Church" (24 pages). In both cases the discussion follows the same pattern: an exposition of the biblical evidence, then answers to objections. "This book focuses on the question of admitting women to the teaching and ruling offices and functions of the church. This is the issue most debated and discussed" (pp. 10-11). Knight's work was written in large measure as an answer to the previously published books by Scanzoni and Hardesty (1974) and Jewett (1975), and the heart of his interaction with them comes in the second half of each major chapter, "Objections Answered."

Knight begins his discussion of submission and headship in marriage by treating briefly (in two pages) the biblical evidence: both Paul and Peter join together equality as image-bearers and difference (masculinity-femininity) "as equally the result of God's creative activity and order . . ." (p. 20). This leads immediately to the question of whether submission of wives to husbands does not also sanction slavery and require government by kings. Knight responds that Scripture regulates the practice of slavery but does not mandate it. Paul's approach to it was similar to Jesus' view of divorce: both may exist because of the effects of sin, but neither is the express will of God. Nor does Scripture demand government by monarchs; rather, Christians are to submit to duly constituted human authorities so long as their directives do not contravene the divine will. Similarly, husbands are to be the heads of their marriages and wives are to submit to this authority because it is the creation ordinance of God.

Knight prefaces his discussion of submission and headship in the church by noting that attention must be concentrated on explicit, didactic passages in order to prevent erroneous conclusions being inferred from incidental references. He treats in order "I Timothy 2:11-15, which most clearly gives both the apostle Paul's verdict and his reason for that verdict; I Corinthians 11:1-16, which explains the significance of this reason; and I Corinthians 14:33b-38, which presents the apostle's command and his reason for it in more general terms" (p. 29).

Knight concludes from his survey of these passages that Paul laid down "a universally normative regulation which prohibits



women from ruling and teaching men in the church," although all other avenues of ministry and service are open to them. This judgment is analogous to the creation order with its correlatives of headship and subjection. "To dismiss the role relationship in the church's teaching-ruling function as simply cultural would carry with it the dismissal of the analogous role relationship in marriage as also cultural, because they are based on the same principle. . . . Likewise, if one preserves the role relationship in marriage because of the creation order, one also must preserve the role relationship in the church's teaching-ruling function, because it is based on that same creation order" (p. 39).

Knight answers several objections against this line of interpretation, especially questions of whether Paul's exegesis of Gen. 2:18-25 may not be incorrect, whether this exegesis does not contradict I Cor. 11:5 on women praying and prophesying in the church, and whether this approach does not have the effect of excluding women's gifts and service from the people of God. To all of these questions Knight answers no, then turns to brief considerations of Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-2) and Prisca (Priscilla). Both of these women served the church in helping capacities, but neither exercised a public ministry of teaching or ruling.

Following the concluding chapter the book reprints in an appendix a statement on "Office in the New Testament (and the Ministry of Women)" from the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, a paper presented in 1972 by the Advisory Committee of which Dr. Knight was Reporter. The work includes two indices that are detailed for so brief a book.

Knight's work is admirable for its attempt to be objective in speaking to the issues, and at no point does he engage in criticism of those who adopt a different interpretation from his. It also is to be admired for attempting to let Scripture be the deciding forum, not contemporary sociology, psychology, or political theory. And it is to be admired for attempting to give full weight to what appear to be the most explicit scriptural passages on the subjects at hand.

But therein lies the problem with his book. It seems to operate in a vacuum almost entirely Pauline in nature. No attention is given at any point to the world of the first century and how the Pauline directives would impact on its citizens. No attention is given to whether Jesus ever did or said anything that would alter that world's situation, however indirectly. The assumption seems to be that Jesus came to reaffirm the creation orders and that Paul explicates that. As to whether the end might be better than the beginning, nothing is said. And the fact that Luke, Paul's longtime companion, presents a rather different picture of women in his Gospel and the Acts seems to escape notice.

## DON WILLIAMS (1977)

Educated at Princeton University and Seminary, Union Theological Seminary, and Columbia University (Ph.D), Dr. Williams is on the faculty of Claremont (California) Men's College. Prior to that he served for eleven years on the staff of Hollywood Presbyterian Church. He produced *The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church* (Regal Books, G/L Publications, 1977, 157 pp.) after writing *The Bond That Breaks: Will Homosexuality Split the Church?*

Williams' book is constructed in three parts: "A Survey of Contemporary Views," "The Pauline Epistles," and "Conclusion." He states as presuppositions his belief that the letters of Paul are inspired Scripture addressed to concrete historical situations and that, even in their problematic passages, they are consistent.

In Part I he quickly surveys several present-day approaches: *Fascinating Womanhood* (Helen Andelin), *The Total Woman* (Marabel Morgan), *The Christian Family* (Larry Christenson), *The Feminine Mystique* (Betty Friedan), *All We're Meant to Be* (Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty), and *Man as Male and Female* (Paul Jewett).

Part II is the heart of Williams' work, constituting two-thirds of the book. He describes the method to be followed: "Each of Paul's letters will be studied in its historical context with care given to *all* references to women whether they emerge from the Old Testament, or early church practice, Paul's personal relationships, or his theological treatments" (p. 30). This gives to his work a mass of information not usually found in such studies because there are far more allusions to women in Paul's epistles than many at first imagine. Williams' procedure is to move through the Pauline corpus in canonical order from Romans to Philemon, and he finds some reference to the feminine in every document except 2 Thessalonians.

For example, in discussing Phoebe of Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1-2) Williams notes that she is termed *diakonos*, a term Paul used also of himself and Apollos (I Cor. 3:5), of Tychicus (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7), of Timothy (I Tim. 4:6), and of Jesus (Rom. 15:8). Williams infers that Phoebe undoubtedly performed ministerial functions which were shared by Paul and his male associates, and that divine favor attended her ministry for she was "a helper of many."

Again, Christian marriage is to be a partnership between equals as implied in I Cor. 7:1-5 where, especially in verse 2, the apostle employs full symmetry of grammar and content regarding husbands and wives. This makes it possible for mutual love and self-giving to be expressed in marital sexuality. Further than that, "we must assume that this primal equality will manifest itself throughout the marriage relationship. Marriage here is indeed a partnership" (p. 55).

In I Cor. 11:2-16 Paul upholds the cultural practices of veiling and of long hair as an expression of wives' dependence upon their husbands and their differences from them. Sexual differentiation in the created order ("in the flesh") is maintained alongside equality in redemption ("in the Lord"). But it is the latter which is the final, unalterable reality.

Gal. 3:28 articulates "Paul's radical step beyond the old order. Redemption does not merely restore God's intention in creation. Redemption brings into being a whole new world, a whole new order" (p. 82). The church, even though it may preserve the form of the old order to avoid misunderstanding, is to be obedient to the spirit of the new order. That is, the unity of male and female in Christ is to be both appreciated and demonstrated in the life of the church—a theme which Williams emphasizes at several places in his work (e.g., pp. 59, 66, 139).

A similar outlook is to be seen in Eph. 5:21-33 for, "while Paul maintains the traditional hierarchical structure of the submission of wives to their husbands he modifies it by mutual submission and changes the content. Christ is the standard and model. It is the love of Christ and the body of Christ which are to determine the context and quality of marriage" (p. 92). "Christian marriage is egalitarian and a partnership in that husbands and wives are to live in mutual submission to Christ and to each other. Wives express their submission by surrendering themselves to the love of Christ given them through their husbands. Husbands express their submission by loving their wives as Christ loves the church and gave Himself for her" (p. 92).

In discussing Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2-3), Williams observes that Paul uses the strongest possible terms of commendation. The two women had labored side by side with him (or fought beside him) "in the gospel." That is, they had shared a common task, not serving under the apostle nor behind or below him, but alongside him. In fact, it was their very position in ministry with the apostle that made them capable of destroying the unity of the Philippians. Further, Paul identified them not only with himself but also with another male, Clement, and "the rest of my fellow workers." Co-worker was a term used of Prisca in Rom. 16:3, as well as of Euodia and Syntyche here. Paul elsewhere applies the term to male associates such as Aquila, Urbanus, Timothy, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, and Epaphroditus.

Williams understands the obscure reference in I Tim. 2:15 to point to the birth of the Messiah through woman, erasing the priority of Eve in being deceived (I Tim. 2:13-14). "Thus as the Savior comes from a woman, she and all women are united corporately to Eve in redemption. Thus all women participate in bearing the Messiah" (p. 113). From this passage Williams infers that, once the



abuses addressed in the pastoral epistles had been corrected, the time would come for women to engage in the teaching task of the church. "Can she who bears the Messiah be prohibited from teaching His gospel?" (p. 114).

Part III of the book embraces the following sections: "Women's Place in God's Work," "Women's Identity" (to be found, as for men, in Christ), "Paul's Use of Women's Identity," "Women in God's Hierarchy," and "Women in Partnership" (or, better, "familyhood," both theological, marital, and ministerial). The work concludes with an eloquent plea for the church to divest itself of male presumption which discriminates against women in ministerial functions.

The strength of Williams' treatment lies in its semi-popular nature which keeps documentation to a scant minimum but nevertheless shows evidence of research in the standard exegetical literature. The study of all references to women in all the Pauline corpus must also be listed as a strength of his work. The allusions prove to be more numerous than some might suppose, certain of the more incidental ones proving to be quite important (e.g., Rom. 16:1-2; I Cor. 7:1-5; Phil. 4:2-3, as described above).

The author's decision to continue using the term "hierarchy" may prove to be a weakness in light of his strong egalitarian emphasis. The Pauline hierarchical teaching as Williams interprets it is soteriological (salvation, servanthood, mutual submission) rather than ontological. Recognition of Christ's headship and lordship are not in the created structure of things but are the result of his triumph in saving activity. Thus human obedience in submission, while appearing to retain traditional forms, actually is infused with a radically new content, the life-quality of self-giving love. All this is at times difficult to follow in the author's discussion but, as he aptly observes, "Redemption does not merely restore God's intention in creation. Redemption brings into being a whole new world, a whole new order" (p. 82). Williams is to be commended for insisting that, if this is truly the church's experience, then it must model and demonstrate this in its structures, functions, and ministries.

## EVELYN AND FRANK STAGG (1978)

Dr. Frank Stagg, Senior Professor of New Testament at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary together with his wife Evelyn researched and wrote *Woman in the World of Jesus* (Westminster Press, 1978, 292 pp.). Evelyn Stagg completed three years' training in Greek and, with the exception of Hebrew, finished all course work for the Th.M. degree. Frank Stagg holds the doctorate

from Southern Baptist Seminary, has done post-doctoral study at the universities of Edinburgh, Basel, and Tübingen, and is the author of *New Testament Theology* (1962), *Polarities of Man's Existence in Biblical Perspective* (1973), and commentaries on Acts (1955) and Philippians (1971).

The book the Staggs produced is divided into three nearly equal parts: "The World into Which Jesus Came," "Jesus and Woman," and "The Early Church and Woman." Part I examines the Jewish, Greek, and Roman environments, devoting a major chapter to each. The authors are careful to show that the Jewish literary world included not only the Old Testament but also the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the writings of Philo and Josephus, and the Mishnah—all of them reflecting the roles of women.

In discussing women in the Greek world the authors describe the literature from the ninth to the fifth centuries B.C., then the Greek drama, and they conclude by surveying Greek writers from the fifth to the third centuries, especially Plato and Aristotle. Their description of the Roman world begins with the playwrights Plautus and Terence, continues through Cicero, Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius, and concludes with Virgil and Ovid.

Only after devoting nearly one hundred pages to this environmental survey are the Staggs ready to turn to Part II, "Jesus and Woman." Here, contrary to the expectations of some, they do not at first examine passages that may contain Jesus' teachings about male-female relationships. Instead, the authors wisely devote a chapter to "The Manner of Jesus" in which they amass considerable material reflecting the attitude Jesus demonstrated toward women as it can be reconstructed from the Gospel narratives. "The 'criterion of discontinuity,' his striking dissimilarity to both Jewish and early Christian piety, encourages this confidence" (p. 102).

Against this detailed backdrop they are then ready to portray "The Teaching of Jesus," which they see as not directed so much at women's liberation as toward human liberation. "Personhood and faith/obedience to God are primary and sufficient" (p. 139). As a function of this, Jesus' approach to women was remarkably open, and there is no indication that he ever denigrated woman as woman. In this he was radically different from the world into which he came.

The Staggs devote a chapter to "The Risen Christ and Woman," asserting, "The most significant affirmation of woman in the New Testament may well be found in the tradition made prominent in all four Gospels that women were the ones to find the tomb of Jesus empty; that according to Mark and Luke the announcement of Jesus' resurrection was first made to women; and according to Matthew and John, Jesus actually appeared first to women (in

John to Mary Magdalene alone); and that according to all four Gospels women were commissioned to inform Peter and the other apostles as to the most fundamental tenet of the Christian faith, that Jesus is not dead but risen!" (p. 144). They observe that, while the church's public tradition as exemplified in the *kerygma* did not utilize this material, "the empty tomb tradition lives on because it was so early, so deeply embedded, and so widely known that it could not be ignored by the Gospels . . . ." (p. 159).

Part III, "The Early Church and Woman," contains four chapters, the first of which concerns "Paul and Woman." Noting that the apostle was a follower of Jesus and, like all followers, fell short of the one being followed, the authors at the outset ask for Paul to be judged by the direction in which he was moving, not solely by the point of his progress. They consider in turn Paul's vision as set out in Gal. 3:28; his implementation of that vision in I Thes., I Cor., Rom., and Phil.; and his treatment of ordination and ministry, the basic criterion for which is possessing the requisite spiritual gifts.

Paul apparently was at the center of the early church's struggle between freedom and order, legalism and license. At times he "did not have the luxury of setting forth an ideal; he was hard pressed to bring some order out of near chaos" (pp. 168f.). To meet this need the church developed the *Haustafeln*, the tables of household duties reflected in the epistles beginning about A.D. 60. The Staggs turn to this subject in their chapter "The Domestic Code and Woman." Here they examine Col. 3:18-4:1; Eph. 5:22-6:9; I Pet. 2:13-3:7; Tit. 2:1-10; and I Tim. in light of the threat of moral permissiveness and the danger to structures within and outside the church.

The closing chapters, "Woman in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts" and "Woman in the Johannine Writings," attempt to explore the theology of the Evangelists writing in the period following the struggles of Paul. The authors state, ". . . a major interest for us is the greater freedom accorded woman in the Gospels than in the epistles. The Gospels know nothing of the rules and regulations imposed upon women in I Corinthians and in the letters containing the Domestic Code. If the Gospels were written after the epistles, the pattern calls for explanation" (p. 205). The Staggs are persuaded that the Gospels accurately reflect Jesus' free, open attitude toward women and that the Gospel writers agreed with this. While Acts appears to be more male-oriented than the Gospel according to Luke, there is no denigration of woman in it. They conclude that the Evangelists seem to be comfortable with Jesus' perspective and that either our dating of the N.T. documents is out of order or Acts reveals that the Pauline restrictions were not applied in all the churches outside his mission field. The picture holds true also for



the Johannine corpus, although the male orientation in language continues to be strong there.

This carefully researched work demonstrates the kind of patient, detailed study that must go into any proper resolution of today's issues in light of Scripture. Especially commendable is the determination to present all evidence, secular or scriptural, in what may be its chronological order, thus avoiding the trap of placing favorite texts first or last for emphasis. The Staggs have taken pains to set out the context in which first Jesus and then his early followers worked. Some readers may become impatient with what appears to be overlapping in the book's organization (e.g., some passages are discussed under both "The Manner of Jesus" and "Woman in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts"), but the proper separation between Jesus and the Evangelists remains one of the most delicate questions in N.T. studies. Some readers may demur at the authors' acceptance of the documentary hypothesis of Pentateuchal sources (Gen. 1, 2), but much of their argument could proceed from the text without the theory.

The Staggs also have tried to explain the varying voices heard within the N.T. documents, concluding that the gospel of grace proved to be too much for some persons in certain situations. Some readers, however, may disagree with their description of the diversity, especially when they conclude that Paul, unable to implement the vision of freedom that he inherited from his Lord, chose to impose restrictions in some congregations in order to preserve order. His restrictions, possibly meant to be only temporary and local, came to be the rule in the developing church beyond the N.T., which in turn led to the male-dominated community it has been until today. Although the authors do not interact at all with the biblical feminists (none of whom are cited in the volume), the patient, scholarly research demonstrated here can be a model in future discussions.

### SUSAN T. FOH (1979)

*Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1979, 270 pp.) comes from the pen of Susan T. Foh, who was educated at Wellesley College (B.A.) and Westminster Theological Seminary (M.A.R.). A housewife and shopkeeper, Foh has published several scholarly articles prior to release of this volume. Her work shows admirable qualities of attempting to build a biblical theology through use of primary and secondary literatures, including employment of the ancient languages.

The book contains ten chapters, several of them more extensive than the remainder. Chapters I and II deal with the nature, au-

thority, and interpretation of Scripture, especially in light of the approach of the biblical feminists. The major discussion is to be found in Chapters III, IV, and VIII, dealing with "What the Old Testament Says about Women," "What the New Testament Says about Women," and "Marriage: Submission and Love." In her extensive discussion of woman in the O.T. Foh concludes that men and women are equally in the image of God by creation (Gen. 1) but that the male's temporal priority in Gen. 2 signals his functional authority over his wife in marriage. The woman is a helper not inferior to the man, but corresponding to him in dignity and status. Thus, throughout the O.T., mothers as well as fathers named their children and both parents were to be obeyed and honored.

When she moves to the N.T., Foh observes at the outset, "There is only one area where most students of the New Testament agree regarding women: Jesus treated women as they should be treated. . . . There is no doubt that Jesus' treatment of women was a radical break with the status quo" (p. 90). She concludes from Jesus' behavior toward women that he desired them to learn from him and expected them to witness to him.

The form this would take was spelled out in the early church by Paul. His specific directions and their theological foundation are the key to understanding the historical descriptions found in the Gospels and the Acts. Foh notes, however, "This key does not eliminate all problems. Almost every passage that directly addresses women has a cryptic reference (such as 'because of the angels' in I Cor. 11:10) or technical ambiguities (such as the referent of women in I Tim. 3:11). Another problem is alleged contradictions among these passages (I Cor. 11:5, 13 versus I Cor. 14:34-35; Gal. 3:28 versus I Tim. 2:11-15)" (p. 98).

She proceeds to study Paul's commands to women, devoting major attention to I Cor. 11:2-16 (17 pages), I Cor. 14:34-35 (5 pages), I Tim. 2:8-15 (7 pages), "Marriage" (i.e., Eph. 5:21-33, 11 pages), and Gal. 3:28 (3 pages). Her conclusion is that three biblical principles are established in Gen. 1-2, undergirded by O.T. legislation, assumed by Jesus, and explained by Paul: (1) Men and women are equally in the image of God (ontological equality). (2) Wives are to submit themselves to their husbands, and women are not to teach or exercise authority over men in the church (economic or functional subordination). These two principles, one of the antinomies of Scripture, are held together and the tension between them eased by a third principle: (3) Husband and wife are one flesh, and believers are one body in Christ. This union in church and home is founded upon agape-love.

In the second half of her book Foh seems to work out some of the unanswered questions that have arisen and develops some implica-

tions of her interpretation. She argues, for example, that God is neither male nor female but God-language is masculine because it points ultimately to Jesus Christ. Also, "It is the husband's headship and the wife's submission that makes it necessary to address God as Father, not Mother" (p. 153). "God created the man first and intended the man to be the head of his wife and men to be rulers of the church; these two facts are coordinated" (p. 171). The functional distinction between husband and wife in marriage may be intended to reflect the relationship that God has with his people, a sacredly intimate union marked by submission on one side and self-giving love on the other (pp. 178f.).

But Foh's understanding of how this works holds a few surprises for those who think she is nothing more than a typical traditionalist. In her third lengthy chapter (VI. "Marriage: Submission and Love," 41 pages) she not only continues her dialogue with the biblical feminists but also reveals her disagreement with certain ideas of such well-known traditionalists as Larry Christenson, Elizabeth Elliott, and Marabel Morgan. Marriage as Foh sees it is neither dictatorship nor democracy but a one-flesh relationship modeled on that between Christ and his church. In this union submission and obedience are not identical; the former is "an attitude, a quiet and gentle spirit" expected of the wife. "If a wife must disobey her husband for Christ's sake, she can do it with submission" (p. 185).

Neither are submission and love identical, for the latter is the functional activity of the husband. Agape-love is commanded and therefore it is an activity subject to the will. A husband is to love his wife not because he is head of the wife but because the two are one flesh. Both partners have equal access to God so that the husband is not his wife's priest. If a man or woman is unwilling to enter such a relationship, says Foh, let him or her remain unmarried, singly devoted to the Lord. This is a special gift. "The single person is not to be pitied but respected. To be single is best. And it is time the church realized this fact in word and deed" (p. 220).

In a final chapter Foh discusses "Women and the Church." The major question, as she sees it, is not whether to ordain women; rather, "What ordination means is a more basic question. The biblical picture is not well-defined" (p. 232). Ordination conveys neither grace nor authority but only recognizes the gifts that God has bestowed for ministry. Foh asserts that there is only one valid reason against women's ordination: Scripture forbids it (I Tim. 2:12). Women in the church are not to teach men or rule over them because this violates the creation order (Gen. 2). The diaconal ministry, in her opinion, does not involve either teaching or ruling and therefore women may be ordained as deacons (contra Knight). Similar reasoning opens to them all kinds of administrative posi-



tions but closes the door to being evangelists. "The church not only wastes the gifts of women; it wastes the gifts of the laity as a whole, and it often misuses the gifts of the clergy" (p. 258).

Foh's work is a commendable piece of exegesis, at times discursive in manner, but always well informed and closely reasoned. The volume might be improved by giving more attention to organization, tightening up the writing style, and including an index (a serious loss in a work of this size and detail). It is indeed "A Response to Biblical Feminism," but it is not a rehash of the traditionalist position. One can get the impression at points that Foh could wish the feminist case to be correct, but Scripture and that alone compels her to the stance she has adopted, within which she finds more freedom than many have allowed.

Her exegesis is valuable, but a work entitled *Women and the Word of God* should give more than passing attention to the mention of women outside of legislative passages. For example, in her treatment of women in the early church, there is very slim discussion of references to women apart from the commands given about their conduct. There is no substantive discussion of Jesus' handling of the divorce question and what that might imply or of Paul's discussion in I Cor. 7—in both of which considerable mutuality lies unexpressed in so many words. Foh falls into the same pit as the feminists with whom she disagrees: "They designate certain passages to be the norm by which other passages are to be judged . . ." (p. 27). Her emphasis on equality before God is to be applauded, but the pervasive subordinationism based on Gen. 2 is in danger of overpowering it. That is, because so much attention is given to certain scriptural passages, the antinomy which she claims to find in Scripture becomes lopsided and is no longer an antinomy.

## SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The question of roles and relationships as set out in Scripture is a highly complex one. Simple proof-texting at any point in the spectrum of opinion will no longer suffice; a larger rationale is called for. Susan Foh's use of the categories antinomy and tension is helpful, for it reminds us that here (as in other controverted territories) the exegete is sometimes faced with a both-and rather than an either-or. Radical positions at either extreme insist on a dichotomous approach while the broader vision of those in the middle may recognize the need for a both-and but not be able to articulate that position so clearly. Several elements in the present picture may be briefly delineated.

(1) *Gen. 1 and 2*. The two creation narratives are not in competition with each other but are complementary. It may be that, as

they appear in the text, the first is intended to set out the main theme (equality or mutuality) while the second describes more prosaic details. The heavy use of the latter by Paul in his "letters to young [and troubled] churches" must not obscure the fact that, according to the Gospel accounts, Jesus based his concept of marriage on Gen. 1, adding only the final comment from Gen. 2:24 (Mk. 10:2-12 and parallels). It is easy to see how feminists emphasize Gen. 1 while traditionalists stress Gen. 2.

(2) *Creation and redemption.* A related question is whether the purpose of redemption is to restore the Edenic situation or to offer something beyond. In other words, is Gen. 1-2 meant to be the first word in the story or the final word? It is reported that Jesus said, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die any more, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Lk. 20:34-36). If Christians are to some extent participating in the age to come even now because of Jesus' triumph in redemption, what does that mean for the standards of their continuing life in this age?

(3) *Jesus and Paul.* The agent of this redemption was Jesus the Galilean Jew who, just because he was a Galilean, was theologically suspect in certain powerful Jerusalem circles. And, as is frequently noted in the literature on the question, Jesus' openness toward members of the opposite sex was without parallel or antecedent in Judaism. As Foh aptly remarks, he knew how to treat a lady. It is no wonder that the feminist position finds in this "layman" its chief advocate and defender. Paul, on the other hand, while affirming women at various points in his correspondence, also laid down strictures on their behavior and function in the first-century *ekklesiai*. Because his instructions were specific it is easy to focus on them, virtually ignoring whatever Jesus may have said or done about the question. While personalities and situations reveal diversity, we must assume that those who formed the N.T. canon saw unity between the apostle and the one whom he called Lord. It will not do to set one against the other or to elevate the servant over his master.

(4) *Direction and indirection.* Part of the apparent difference between Jesus and Paul may be attributed to their respective methods of teaching, as much as they can be reconstructed from the available data. It appears that Jesus taught at times by indirection. He created parables which demanded a response from his hearers. Or he conducted himself in a manner unusual for his time and place, raising questions in the minds of those who observed him; afterward he engaged in verbal instruction, thus employing an approach that was a sophisticated show-and-tell method. Paul,

on the other hand, was primarily a church planter and mission pastor. His manner was often direct, looking for an opening in which to insert his gospel wedge. His correspondence was weighty and persuasive, though at times hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:15-16), but his personal bearing was not always what his readers expected (2 Cor. 10:9-10). It is easy to fasten on his direct statements about the conduct of women in his first-century mission congregations. It is more difficult to infer what Jesus' intentions for women were, although it is, if anything, even more important to try. In the final analysis, Jesus' indirection and Paul's directions ought to come out at the same place if Scripture possesses an underlying unified biblical theology.

(5) *Ontology and economy.* In all of this it is frequently claimed that men and women are ontologically equal but functionally distinct beyond reproduction. Appeal is sometimes made to the analogy with the holy trinity in which there are three who are equal in being and nature but function differently from one another in the economy of redemption. This is especially true of the second person of the godhead who for us and for our salvation became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was subject both to his earthly parents and to the heavenly Father. How are the mutual dignity, voluntary submission, and self-giving love expected of humans to be related to the persons and working of the divine trinity as revealed in Scripture? None of the works reviewed here addresses this area in sufficient depth, and until this is adequately done the large differences in interpreting the biblical materials will continue. We need a full-scale biblical theology of human personhood as created, redeemed, and related.



# GUIDELINES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL EVALUATION

by Richard E. Allison

*Evaluation* is asking the question, "Is God well served by what we are doing?"<sup>1</sup>

Usually this is asked either in a formative or a summative way. The former sees evaluation as integral to the process. The latter sees it as independent from the process and determines how effective something has been after it has been completed. It is judgmental in intent and raises defenses and closes down relationships. The formative method focuses on describing what is and, therefore, has the possibility of opening up joint exploration and sharing. It keeps us moving.

Formative evaluation declares that the participant is the primary source of information. It requires the thought forms of the participants. It avoids putting words in their mouths. Pre-evaluation is often employed to determine the categories. The problem one must contend with in formative evaluation is the tendency for respondents to be overly affirming.

In the Sunday school it is usually too threatening to evaluate persons who are volunteers. There are some exceptions to this as when they assist in design, develop ownership and in a sense request it.

Formative evaluation is continuous or at least a part of the loop. It is not something which is done at the conclusion. It serves to surface needs and/or to give new direction.

What follows is an experience in formative evaluation for the Sunday school to be completed by the nurture commission or Christian education committee of the congregation. It consists of five parts derived from church growth literature and covers the following areas.

1. Leadership
2. Planning
3. Personnel
4. Focus
5. Outreach

## *Pastoral Leadership*<sup>2</sup>

The pastor is the key person for growth in the local church. This does not mean that a pastor can make a church grow. A pastor must have the vision and earn the right to lead and the congregation must be willing to support him. Together they can accomplish great things.

1-1 Describe the leadership style of the pastor.<sup>3</sup>

1-2 List ways the pastor supports the work of the Sunday school.<sup>4</sup>

1-3 How can the relationship between the pastor and the Sunday school be improved?

### ***Adequate Planning***

The first requirement for adequate planning is to know what you want to accomplish. To identify your purpose for Sunday school will be your most difficult and most important task. Next comes the establishment of goals. Goals help us to:

1. Look forward
2. Work together
3. Measure progress
4. Celebrate accomplishments

2-1 Identify your Sunday school audience and list their needs and expectations.

2-2 What is it that you want to accomplish in Sunday school?<sup>5</sup>

2-3 What learning settings do you provide to accomplish these goals?<sup>6</sup>

2-4 How do you evaluate the quality of your learning experiences?

2-5 What percent of the total church budget goes for Sunday school?

### ***Caring Personnel***<sup>7</sup>

Just as the planning for a growing Sunday school is dependent upon pastoral leadership so the implementing of the plan is dependent upon a mobilized laity.

3-1 What are the positions of leadership in your Sunday School?

Planning

Administering

Teaching

3-2 How are leadership needs identified?



3-3 Describe the process for selecting and recruiting educational leadership for your congregation.<sup>8</sup>

3-4 What type of training is provided for these persons?<sup>9</sup>

3-5 How are they supported and encouraged in their respective roles?<sup>10</sup>

3-6 How does the congregation express its appreciation to the staff and celebrate their service?

3-7 How adequate are your present procedures?

### ***Learner Focus***

Learner focus means that our primary concern is people. Transformation is the goal. (Luke 6:40)

4-1 How are persons helped to grow as Christians in their relation to:  
God  
Self  
Others  
The world

4-2 What educational materials are used in the Sunday School?

4-3 What theory of learning do you practice?

4-4 How do you identify the learning needs of persons in your Sunday school?

4-5 What facilities and equipment are available?<sup>11</sup>

4-6 How is your Sunday school supportive of Christian family life?

4-7 How do you develop an appreciation for your own Christian tradition?

### ***Planned Outreach***

Sunday school has declined in nearly all denominations in the decade of the seventies. Forty million persons were enrolled in Sunday school in 1970. In the next decade, enrollment dropped to 31.5 million. This is a twenty four per cent decadal decline. Over half of U.S. denominations reported church membership growth in the decade of the seventies. Only nine registered any growth in their Sunday school for the same period.<sup>12</sup>

5-1 How has the attendance of your Sunday school increased or declined in the decade of the seventies?

5-2 After charting on a line graph your Sunday school and worship attendance for 1970-1980, identify any sharp changes in attendance and determine the reasons for these changes.<sup>13</sup>

5-3 Determine how the members of your committee were led to attend Sunday school.<sup>14</sup>



5-4 What is your plan for locating and reaching prospective members for your Sunday school?<sup>15</sup>

5-5 How do you contact visitors and follow-up absentees?

5-6 What is your plan for assimilating new persons?<sup>16</sup>

5-7 What new learning settings have you initiated in the past year?

### ***Conclusion***

6-1 At what points is your Sunday school strong?

6-2 What are the weaknesses of your Sunday school?

6-3 What do you want to change?

6-4 What do you plan to accomplish in one year?

6-5 What do you plan to accomplish in five years?

6-6 What is your Sunday school membership goal for this decade?

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Richard G. Hutcheson, Jr., *Wheel Within The Wheel: Confronting The Management Crisis Of The Pluralistic Church*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), p. 205.

<sup>2</sup>C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow*, (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1976), p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>This can be ascertained by employing any one of several instruments such as:

- a. "Style of Leadership Questionnaire," available from Fuller Evangelistic Association, P.O. Box 989, Pasadena, CA 91102
- b. "Personal Profile System", available from Fuller Evangelistic Association
- c. "Style of Leadership Questionnaire", from the March 1976 issue of *Faith At Work*.
- d. "Choosing Your Leadership Style", found in the book *Organization And Leadership In the Local Church* by Kenneth K. Kilinski and Jerry C. Wofford, pp. 69-78.

<sup>4</sup>Judy Meyers, ed., *Process '80*. (Evanston, IL: Board Of Christian Education Baptist General Conference, 1979), pp. 22, 24.

<sup>5</sup>Consult Appendix A for a form to use.

<sup>6</sup>Consult Appendix B for a form to use.

<sup>7</sup>Meyers, pp. 43-54.

<sup>8</sup>Lowell E. Brown, *Sunday School Standards*, (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light Publications, 1980), p. 29.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 16, 106, 109.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup>Charles Arn, Donald McGavran, Win Arn, *Growth: A New Vision For The Sunday School*, (Pasadena, CA: Church Growth Press, 1980), p. 29.

<sup>13</sup>Consult Appendix C for a form to use.

<sup>14</sup>Arn, McGavran, Arn, p. 70.

<sup>15</sup>"Community Analysis" is available from Fuller Evangelistic Association.

<sup>16</sup>Arn, McGavran, Arn, pp. 94-114.



## Appendix A

A goal is a statement of results to be achieved. It consists of the following:-

1. An action verb.
2. A single, measurable, key result.
3. A date or time period within which the result is to be achieved.
4. A maximum investment (time/money).

### *Components Of An Objective*

What?	Who?
By When?	To What Extent?

Appendix B

	Basic Ongoing	Basic Occasional	Elective Ongoing	Elective Occasional
Early Childhood				
Childhood				
Youth				
Early Adults				
Middle Adults				
Late Adults				
Singles				
Family Enrichment				
Other				

Appendix C

Attendance

19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19



# A SOLEMN ONE WAY TRIP BECOMES A JOYOUS ROUNDTrip!

## A Study of the Structure of Luke 24:13-35

by Dr. O. Kenneth Walther

Luke's distinctive literary style and his fascinating treatment of theological themes in both his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles have been recognized and widely discussed by commentators and Lukan specialists. Anyone who is interested in pursuing the resurgence of scholarly concern for aspects of Lukan artistry could do not better than start with *Studies in Luke-Acts* edited by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn. Among the score of contributors of essays in this volume is Ernst Haenchen, who later completed his own commentary on Acts. Haenchen refers to Luke's "biblical style."<sup>1</sup> He declares that Luke writes history by relating short, impressive, and dramatic scenes in relatively independent succession using words and phrases of the Septuagint. He further suggests that Luke's literary intention is directed toward captivating and edifying the reader by joining these short, compact, and picturesque scenes together like the stones of a mosaic.

Chapter 24 of Luke's Gospel is a great mosaic of these very picturesque and impressive incidents of the wonder, grandeur, and mystery associated with Easter. The reader is irresistibly drawn to identify with the perplexed and terrified women at the tomb, the despondent travellers on the road to Emmaus, and the dumbfounded disciples in Jerusalem. In the center of this final chapter of his Gospel, Luke's three-part artistic story of the journey of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Jesus' homily on the meaning of Scripture, and his breaking of bread capture the spotlight. Many familiar Lukan touches vividly underscore and add a lasting aura to the remembrance of the first day of resurrection.

### *On the Road to Emmaus*

<sup>13</sup>Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup>As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup>but they were kept from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup>He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup>One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one living in Jerusalem

who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?"

<sup>19</sup>"What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup>The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup>but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup>In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup>but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

<sup>25</sup>He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup>As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

<sup>33</sup>They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together <sup>34</sup>and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." <sup>35</sup>Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.<sup>2</sup>

John Drury comments on this passage:

Here is one of Luke's best and most characteristic achievements, a short story whose spell-binding power comes about by a controlled line, a sober realism and a muted sense of wonder. It is his last great set piece, bringing together most of the themes he has handled throughout the work, yet with such skill that nothing strains or spoils the tale. Everything happens within it. That is typical of Luke, and so is the conjunction of ordinariness and marvel at the climax of the narrative, which so appealed to Rembrandt, the most Lukan of painters. The only things like it in the New Testament are the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan and the Christmas stories—all Luke's.<sup>3</sup>

Many of Luke's stylistic traits and favorite themes are found within this story. They include: precision in giving the distance

from Jerusalem to Emmaus and the naming of an individual; a journey motif to and from Jerusalem; two figures engaged in dialog; the setting of discussion and fellowship at the table with the breaking of bread; and the contrast of moods from uncertainty to joy. I. Howard Marshall, one who has devoted special attention to Luke's historical and theological emphases, has shown that these familiar characteristics are part of Luke's literary style, and far from obscuring the essential historicity, they may serve to enhance and to inscribe the events being recalled indelibly in the minds of the readers.<sup>4</sup>

Some questions inevitably arise, however, for the casual reader as well as for the seasoned exegete. Is it possible to grasp the essential message of this passage and the threefold division of the action of the story without knowledge and appreciation of a distinctive Lukan perspective? Do Luke's style and conscious choice of intermingled and repeated theological motifs add or detract? As pieces of a brilliant mosaic or the warp and woof of an intricately woven oriental carpet, can we dislodge the separate stone pieces or unravel the threads of the story in order to study and reflect upon Luke's essential craftsmanship? And, if we are bold enough to set our hand at doing so, will we destroy or distort his work, or will we be able to discover and display a renewed appreciation for Luke's artistry?

One exegete who has especially pursued the nature and technique of Luke's storytelling and who has affirmed the stylistic precision and literary quality of Luke is Kenneth Bailey. In his work *Poet and Peasant* he submits a series of Lukan parables to what he terms "Oriental Exegesis."<sup>5</sup> His procedure includes examining what contemporary peasants in the Middle East have to say about the meaning of various parables, comparing the early versions and translations for insight into the nature and value of textual variants, and reflecting on the literary milieu of the New Testament period and the genre of literature current outside the New Testament books.

Bailey has pointed out convincingly in his analysis of selected parables in Luke that it is precisely in those sections where Luke has no parallel in the other evangelists that we may be able to identify a conscious literary pattern or structure despite the appearance of recognized Lukan trademarks and touches which often serve to embellish the basic pattern. Bailey's study of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son offers evidence of a poetic form of storytelling known as the "Parabolic Ballad."<sup>6</sup> The structure of each of these parables is inverted parallelism or an ABCBCA type pattern. The climatic center receives the major focus with an ordered set of elements leading up to the main point and a similar

set of points moving back in a balanced arrangement. He represents the story of the Good Samaritan as an ABCDCBA inverted parallelism as follows:

- A. The Robbers
- B. The Priest
- C. The Levite
- D. The Samaritan
- C. He goes to him and binds up his wounds
- B. He puts him on his own beast and carries him to the inn
- A. He cares for him and promised to return

Another feature of this parable is the comparison between the first and last stanza:

#### THE ROBBERS

- 1. took his money
- 2. beat him
- 3. left him half dead (and will not return)

#### THE SAMARITAN

- 1. spent his own money
- 2. cared for him
- 3. left him cared for and promised to return

The story of the Good Samaritan fits Bailey's description of the "Parabolic Ballad" and appears to suit the needs of the storyteller. There is a climatic center or turning point. This provides a means of establishing contrast and special emphasis. The second part calls for the listener to reflect and respond with an appropriate attitude and action such as is portrayed in the parable. Words, phrases, and sentence structure can be matched and contrasted in the two halves.

In chapter 15 of Luke's Gospel the threefold emphasis on "lost and found" in the three parables recorded there offers striking evidence of a recognized and repeated pattern with the usual Lukan variations. Perhaps the following diagram will serve to illustrate the basic staircase structure of these "Parabolic Ballads."



THE LOST SHEEP 15:1-7 "One out of Ninety-Nine"

You  
One  
Ninety-Nine  
Lost  
Found  
Joy  
Restoration "back home"  
Joy  
Found  
Lost  
Ninety-Nine  
One  
You

THE LOST COIN 15:8-10 "One out of Ten"

Lost  
Found  
Joy in Celebration "with friends"  
Found  
Lost

THE LOST SON 15:11-32 "One of Two Sons or Two Sons of One Father"

A Son is Lost  
Goods Wasted  
Everything Lost  
The Great Sin  
Total Rejection  
A Change of Mind  
And Initial Repentance  
Total Acceptance  
The Great Repentance  
Everything Regained  
Goods Used in Celebration  
A Son is Found

The Sequence dealing with the second son is equally as balanced and intriguing in that Bailey's structure leaves the parable open-ended with the response of the second son not stated in the parable, but implied if the parable is, in fact, to have the first and second halves balanced around the center. Bailey's structure is as follows:

Second Son comes

Your Brother is Safe; There is Feasting

A Father Comes Out to Reconcile

Complaint No. 1 Look How You Treat Me!

Complaint No. 2 Look How You Treat Him!

A Father Tries to Reconcile Still a Second Time

Your Brother is Safe; There is Feasting

(Will the Second Son Come Inside?)

Bailey's efforts in finding an essential structure for Lukan parables deserves more attention than can be devoted in this survey. His work calls attention to the need for greater appreciation of the nature and form of the "Parabolic Ballad." Perhaps even more significant has been his discovery of what he calls "Theological Clusters," namely, the clustering of theological motifs within the parables so arranged as to impel a listener to identify with and to respond to the parable in terms of repentance, faith and discipleship.<sup>7</sup> His thesis seems to be that the symbols and the structure of the parables call for a response.

If, as John Drury states, the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus belongs to same literary and narrative structure as the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, it appears that this threefold story should be able to be analyzed in a manner suggested by Kenneth Bailey. A survey of leading commentators has revealed that while most see the three different sections of the story, none have observed elements of a "Parabolic Ballad" as part of the essential structure. Generally, the parable has been divided into three standard sections. E. Earle Ellis calls this passage "The Emmaus Appearance: The Message of Jesus" 24:13-32. He sees the structure as consisting of the opening conversation of "the stranger" (13-24) followed by the Lord's exposition of the Scriptures (25-27) with the climax occurring at the supper scene (28-32) in which the disciples recognize Jesus and recall how he "opened the scriptures" to them.<sup>8</sup>

Is it possible to observe another structural arrangement within this three-part story? If we keep in mind the possibility of inverted parallelism as forming the backbone of the entire passage, then perhaps the following division may be made:

Disciples in Conflict Flee Jerusalem 13-24

The Character of Jesus Revealed 25-30

Disciples with Renewed Hope Return to Jerusalem 31-35

Since the journey motif figures prominently in both the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, it is not surprising that this motif provides the setting for this parable. Although Emmaus

is mentioned only in verse 13, the actual arrival there falls in the center of the story and provides another type of emphasis:

Jerusalem 13

Emmaus 28-29

Jerusalem 33

The inner experience of the disciples offers a further contrast within the parable. In the first half the disciples are filled with uncertainty. They suggest a picture of despondency and misery in the opening of the parable. Within the second half they have become transformed by joy and are seen running back to Jerusalem. The following scheme may be suggested.

Two disciples flee Jerusalem 13

Uncertainty characterizes their walk 14

Jesus joins them in their walk 15

The two do not recognize him 16

Their faces are sad 17

The two disciples talk to Jesus 18-24

Jesus talks to them 25-27

They arrive at Emmaus 28-29

Jesus breaks bread with them at the table 30

The disciples share the bread 30

Their eyes of faith are opened 31

They recognize him 31

Jesus vanishes from their sight 31

Joy and certainty characterize their response 32

Two disciples hasten back to Jerusalem 33-35

It appears that Luke consciously or unconsciously drew the elements of sacred tradition together to form a pattern which he had already used widely earlier in his Gospel. One is left with the intriguing question: Did Luke intend the structure to be a parable for the reader of the early church as well as later readers? Luke's masterful control of the passage suggests that the appearance of the Risen Lord and his explanation of God's plan for believing disciples were intended to convince and confirm these believers in the Risen Messiah. For a brief moment the spotlight shines on Emmaus, but the walk and response of the disciples are seen as essential to the meaning of the parable. At Emmaus they invite Jesus to be their guest; while at the table he becomes their host. The climatic center, the orderly arrangement of phrases, sentences and movement, and the artistic incorporation of clusters of theological motifs will continue to provide a rich treasure for all who take time to appreciate Luke's style and structure. Chapter 24 will continue to offer a mosaic which upon closer examination may lead to deeper

faith and discipleship for anyone who will let the symbols speak. Robert J. Karris has summed up the abiding contribution of this passage:

When all is said and done, the meaning of Jesus' resurrection remains a mystery which eludes our grasp. Pondering its meaning through images is extremely helpful, but is like viewing a precious Rembrandt painting through venetian blinds. Flashes of insight and appreciation must substitute for total comprehension.<sup>9</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ernst Haenchen, "The Book of Acts as Source Material for the History of Early-Christianity," *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. L.E. Keck and J.L. Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), pp. 259ff.

<sup>2</sup>*The New International Version* is quoted.

<sup>3</sup>John Drury, *The Gospel of Luke* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1973), p. 217.

<sup>4</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), pp. 28ff.

<sup>5</sup>Kenneth Bailey, *Poet and Peasant: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 29ff.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 49ff.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 37-43.

<sup>8</sup>E. Earle Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke, in the New Century Bible Commentary* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1974), p. 276.

<sup>9</sup>Robert J. Karris, *Invitation to Luke* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1977), p. 277.



## ANOTHER WAY?

by Arthur M. Climenhaga

The new missionary, said *Newsweek* magazine a number of years ago, does not try to convert the heathern. "He bears witness to his faith by helping them in material ways . . . In a world where political, cultural and economic independence are being pursued with religious fervor it is hard to argue that any one religion has a special virtue above any other."<sup>1</sup>

Then *Newsweek* quotes as an example of the "new breed" of missionaries, Colin Davis who is reported as saying, "St. Paul's methods are no longer successful. The direct approach does not work." The implication is starkly clear: today there is another way than that in which the church of Jesus Christ has been engaged for nearly two thousand years.

But before we give in so easily to the demands of another way, what is the way which Christianity has been following in the missionary motivation, the missionary message, the missionary method? The appeal is to Paul, not necessarily to his methods as Colin Davis alleged, but to Paul's word.

At the heart of the Pauline expression is the following word:

<sup>18</sup>For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. <sup>20</sup>Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? <sup>21</sup>For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. <sup>22</sup>For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: <sup>23</sup>But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; <sup>24</sup>But unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit of these verses can only be understood against the backdrop of first century times. No longer could the Greeks boast of great soldiers or statesmen but they still held their heads high as the intellectual leaders of the hour. The world of that day was dominated politically by the Roman but the conqueror in turn was conquered by the philosophy of the Greek. Standing to the side in religious disdain was the Jew who sensed in his own development the fullest insight concerning the fact of God. All of these have been classified so well as the respective proponents of "know yourself," "rule yourself," "know your God." None of them felt any sense of lack.

Yet it was of this diverse group embodied in the cosmopolitan crossroads of the Near East, Corinthian in character, that the Apostle Paul spoke. To these he declared the simple yet profound fact of the Gospel of the Cross of Christ. He saw them, the contemptuous men that they were, perishing in their sins. In the word of the text the wisdom of the Greek and the practicality of the Jew, the humanistic/anthropomorphic philosophy of one and the self-centered theistic religion of the other, these stood under the condemnation of God. They fell so far short of even a minimal achievement of the noblest aspiration. The inner dynamic, the inner power to change, know, and rule life simply was not there. And as for knowing God, the worship of the ecclesiastics was expressed in forms and traditions and hundreds of laws, but no transforming grace was there.

The modern day is so like Paul's day. The spirit of the hour calls for a new word, a new concept, a new morality—a so-called renewal of old theologies into modern terms and concepts; a renewal of dying church systems into new forms of redemption, reconciliation or liberation; a fusion of all world religions into one glorious, new, unified world religion; a belief in the universal "redemption" of all humanity who come to God in their own sincere ways.

The world was seeking a religion with world-wide validity long before Symmachus, the Roman prefect, remarked about religion, "It is impossible that so great a mystery should be approached by one road only." The strong tendency to synthesize the world's religions, to filter off the elements of truth in each and unite them into a whole, is no longer a major trait of the Eastern religions alone, however. Official statements of spokesmen for too many church and interchurch movements back down from the exclusive claims of Christianity that "neither is there salvation in any other."

From this compromising stance it is but a step to a new universalism of all religions and faiths—a veritable universal fusion of Christianity with animism as well as major ethnic faiths. A leading journalist, David Lawrence, once pictured it as follows:

"Although religious conflicts still divide some countries, emphasis in recent years has turned toward the many things which all religions have in common."<sup>3</sup>

After speaking of the attempts of several church bodies, so diverse in theology, to meet in a new spirit of dialogue as examples of this new spirit, Lawrence goes on to say,

"This is not a new objective. Thirty-five years ago in India, Bhagavan Das, a noted Hindu scholar, traced similarities of Judeo-Christian doctrines and those of ancient Persia, Arabia and China, comparing the teachings of Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius and earlier spiritual leaders. The concept of a supreme being was dominant in virtually all. He concluded: "So

long as men and women are taught to believe that religions differ in essentials, so long will they continue to differ, quarrel, shed each other's blood. If they are led to see that all religions are one and the same—in essentials—they will also become one in heart, and feel their common humanity in loving brotherhood.' ”<sup>3</sup>

In these developments then the sense of the mission of the church comes to full syncretistic flower. Here there is no necessity to challenge men to flee to the Lord Jesus Christ. Here there is no “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” Here there is no wishing oneself accursed for his kinsmen's sake because they are lost. Instead here is the overflowing spirit of a love and service which looks to dialogue with the faiths and practices of the world with a view of introducing to them that which they already are by the grace of God and which they will be whether they accept it or not in this life.

To this world, the word of the cross is foolishness; to the wise, it is the essence of mental stupidity. To believe that the man Jesus, a product of Nazareth, is the Son of God, that He lived in unspotted righteousness though tempted as we are and yet without sin, that He died the death of a criminal and was buried, that He literally rose from the dead in bodily form, that He ascended to His Father in heaven, that He now intercedes for His own at the right hand of the Father, that He will come again to judge the living and the dead, this is the height of foolishness.

Especially the preaching of the cross as an emblem of the crucified Christ, crucified to shed blood as redemption for fallen, sinful man, this today is:

— foolishness to the “honest to what God addict,” the believer in concepts of God who is not “out there” but the “ground of being” (whatever that may mean);

— foolishness to men who believe they can purge their consciences and renew their wills by a denial of guilt and by the process of cultured thinking and insight into a new morality which makes ethical standards of very little effect;

— foolishness to the scientist who places the finding of ultimate answers in norms, computations, formulae;

— foolishness to the man who seeks the answers to the social ills in human concept alone;

— foolishness to the man who is bent on weekend pleasure, recreation;

— foolishness to the worldling who sees in the cross no source of power to carve out a fortune or create a career or become a political power.

— foolishness to the rebels against society who proclaim “love” as



the end all of life but who have no place for the cross of Christ in that love.

This is the situation to which the Apostle Paul speaks—these, he says, are perishing. A fact today which axiom-like needs reaffirmation, which desperately needs renewal in concept and affirmation, is this: Our world is not under the rulership of a benevolent God who will surely save His own. Rather the Bible says the lord of the earth is the evil one, satan, the devil, the prince and power of the air. Society, instead of being under the Lordship of Christ, is under the lordship of the fallen Lucifer. The words of Jesus need re-emphasis, "I saw Satan fall as lightening from heaven."<sup>4</sup>

The world and society as we know it are perishing, and what is the church and the ministry doing about it?

Too often the Church offers humanistic philosophy or anthropomorphic sociology or involvement on a human level alone to lost sinners. There is no word of grace, no surgery of the cross, no Jesus Christ who is the Redeemer of the lost, the Savior of the sinner.

Louise Stoltenberg spoke to this point in *Christianity Today* by citing three examples:

"There is an unusual coffeehouse in Washington, D.C., that is operated by members of a unique ecumenical church in the city. In San Francisco a 'night minister,' a clergyman with fifteen years of pastoral experience, wanders the streets of the Tenderloin district nightly from ten o'clock to early morning, making himself available to any persons who need help. In a Baltimore shopping center anyone interested may step beyond a reception desk into a chapel to pray. Descriptions of all three of these new patterns of church work specifically disclaims any efforts to convert involved; the object rather is to be helpful, to listen, and to serve."<sup>5</sup>

Then she went on to declare in incisive and telling terms:

"So when the institutionalized church makes a gargantuan effort to break out of the confines of its conventional ministry, it too is in the embarrassing situation of not knowing how to be completely true to itself. It too takes the easy route and settles for humanitarianism. But can we even imagine the Apostle Paul trying to 'help people' while remaining silent about the Gospel? Indeed, the Gospel was *the* help he could offer, the key to renewal and the transformed life. 'How shall they hear without a preacher?' was his cry, and it applies to men today just as in Paul's time."<sup>6</sup>

Ah, here lies the key, the resource of renewal, for a church involved in a world in crisis, the affirmation of the evangelical imperative is here in the word of the text, "the preaching of the cross . . . we preach Christ crucified." Here there is no magnification of the liturgical, no delineation of the philosophical, no peroration of the artistic phrase. For in the words of Edmund W. Robb,



The world does not need a better philosophy; it needs a Savior. It does not need a new morality; it needs new life. It does not need reformation; it needs regeneration in Christ. Too often the Church has offered humanistic philosophy to lost sinners. This is giving stones when men ask for bread. We have preached morality and have not offered forgiveness and grace.

It has been noted that the modern Church is not a singing church. No great hymns are being written. You do not sing about a philosophy, and you do not rejoice in a cold morality. We sing about a Person, a Saviour, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' In the Cross of Christ there is an attraction that will bring sinners to repentance and faith. In the Cross we see the love of God. In the Cross we see the awful penalty of sin. In the Cross we see a Saviour dying for us. Let us preach the Christ of the Cross and the empty tomb, and we shall see the world kneel at the feet of Jesus. '... every knee shall bow' ... 'every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord. ...'

If we are to have effective evangelism we must believe in the saving power of the Gospel. The Church is not for nice people but for sinners saved by grace. There is no sin so great, no heart so hard, no person fallen so low, but that Jesus Christ can forgive and transform him and make him whole. Perhaps the Church has lost faith in the changing of the redeeming power of the Saviour. Alcoholics can be made sober, prostitutes made pure, materialists made spiritually minded, sick personalities made well; broken homes can be restored, and wrecked lives can have a new beginning in Christ. Our faith to obtain life-changing power must pass from the psychiatrist's couch to the altar of prayer.

Let us offer to the world the mighty Saviour. In so doing we shall see the beginning of renewal in the Church and salvation for the lost."

Why then has the word of the Cross this power unto salvation? Let us put the question to the New Testament and gather up the broad effect of the New Testament writings as codified in our text so as to learn the secret of the power of the Cross.

First of all, as Dr. W.M. Clow, a great Scottish divine, put it, the word of the Cross of Christ is *the dynamic of a sublime fact*.<sup>8</sup> Any painter attempting to symbolize the Christian Church in human figure would paint her looking forward rather than back—the stance is one of hope rather than a pensive attitude of memory. And yet! the Church looks back repeatedly in remembrance to one supreme fact—the death of Christ on the Cross.

— While we remember the words of the Lord Jesus with awe and wonder and delight, yet the Christian symbol is a cross and not an evangelist's text.

— While we recall Jesus' holy character with reverence and adoration, the Christian symbol is not a lily or a shining face. It is a CROSS!

— While we still go back to the Lord of glory's birth in Bethlehem with gladness and sing carols with our children in praise of the Babe of Bethlehem, the Christian symbol is neither a "wide-eyed babe nor a manger cradle." It is a CROSS!

The supreme fact in Christian history is that Jesus died and the cross stands as the watershed of all of history.

In the New Testament this is the historic fact ruling men's thoughts. Not only does it dominate all else in the Pauline epistles, but you see it running as a thread through Peter and James and John, and with wonderful emphasis in the eloquence of the Hebrew epistle, or in poetic cadence in the Revelation, the word that looks back to the "Lamb that was slain." They knew and understood what was in the heart of the cross because they understood Christ's own emphasis on His death. They could look back to remember the print of the nails, the tragedy of death, the pathos of loneliness, the love that breathed out tender solitudeness, the charity that was fashioned into prayer, the cries that told of grief and pain and torture—these supreme things of the past in Churchillian cadence could be said to be the Son of God's finest hour. The cross was His hour, His cup, His baptism, His uplifting. And as these disciples of old recalled the Cross, its love and sorrow entered their souls. It softened their hearts with convicting grace and through it the shed blood on the cross cleansed their hearts.

And so today we need to declare anew that no man, past or present, ever looked back or looks back to the Cross without knowing it to be the power of God unto salvation. This dynamic is more than a symbol on a church building or a pin in a lapel or an amulet hung around the neck; it is the cry in every human heart, "Oh God, Thy will be done!"

In this sense we declare the word of the Cross to be *the dynamic of a doctrine*. Every student of the New Testament can find this truth expressed in two ways. The first is to be found in the pages of the New Testament. The second, the way in which the power of the Cross is to be seen is in its work of actually redeeming modern day sinners.

Note the arrangement of the New Testament books in a chronological order and you will see the writers grasp of this truth is firmer, their assurance of it more unshakeable, their insight into it more penetrating, and their joy in it more abounding, in the later than in the earlier epistles—thus referring to the truth of the Cross and all it means. For example, compare First Thessalonians to Romans and you will find the doctrine of the Cross has eclipsed in the latter every other truth. Not that the earlier books had any doubt that Jesus came to redeem men by dying for them. But as the years passed, the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of the N.T.

writers found more fertile understanding of the meaning of the Cross.

This is the dynamic of the doctrine in maturing of understanding and experience in one's own life. But the dynamic power is still to be seen in the lives of sinners today who come face to face with its revolutionary message.

Third, the word of the Cross is *the dynamic of a law*. There are other laws in Christian teaching which do demand attention—the gentleness of the Christ, His pity and charity, his patience with the reviler, His longing for the erring and the outcast, His joy in little children, His tenderness with the weak—all of these do speak in relevant terms to us today with respect to our social and community obligations of the hour. BUT we must never forget that to New Testament men the Cross was the supreme law of life. Says Peter speaking of the Christ, "Who suffered for us leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps, who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "He laid down his life for us," says John, calling up the vision of the Cross to selfish hearts, "and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." "Looking unto Jesus," cries the author of the letter to the Hebrews writing to men tempted to look back, "looking unto Jesus who endured the cross and despised the shame." "These are they," rhapsodises the seer of the Revelation as he finds the Cross to be the law of those in the heavenly life, "which follow the Lamb whithsoever he goeth."

This is the way of those who see their Lord in the garden of Gethsamene and cry with him, "Not my will but thine be done," as they face their cross of life.

To such as find the cross the dynamic of a sublime fact, of a doctrine, of a law of life, it will become their ever abiding motive.

Is any person tempted to be mean in his giving? He is pointed to the Cross. Is any one prone to be proud, bitter in temper, rasping in speech? Is any one shirking his or her duty, stinting service, and declining to make the sacrifice conscience claims? Is any person facing a sorrow, or passing through a trial, or becoming bitter with life's misfortunes? The one recourse for all is to the Cross. When one's feet stumble, when one is inclined to seek some softer or forbidden way, when one enters any dark and inexplicable experience, when one goes through the valley of the shadow of death, hold the Cross before that person's eyes. No one of you have ever meekly humbled herself or himself, taken men's slights without resentment, endured their caustic tongues, and kept your feet unfalteringly in the narrow way, without a daily recurrence to the Cross.

There are but two alternatives. There is no other way! The word of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. It is the power of God to those who are being saved.

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,  
Or to defend his cause,  
Maintain the glory of his cross,  
And honour all his laws."

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Newsweek*, (December 30, 1963).

<sup>2</sup>I Corinthians 1:18-25.

<sup>3</sup>David Lawrence, *Reader's Digest*, (October, 1965).

<sup>4</sup>Luke 10:18.

<sup>5</sup>Louis Stoltenberg, "What's Wrong With Church Renewal", *Christianity Today*, IX (April 23, 1965), p. 761 (5).

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>Edmund W. Robb, "Effective Evangelism", *Christianity Today*, IX (April 23, 1965), p. 764 (8).

<sup>8</sup>W.M. Clow, *The Cross in Christian Experience*, (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1930), and note especially chapter XVI, "The Dynamic of the Cross", p. 193.



## THESES (1980-1981)

*We are extremely proud of our students and the research that they pursue. We have asked them to share a short summary of their completed theses at ATS in the hope that others may be made aware of these sources. The theses are bound and in the ATS Library. Those graduates that responded are listed below.*

### **Rick K. Fisk, A Model for a Seminar Approach to Christian Education**

Most of our churches are lacking in the task of Christian Education, when we use the term in its broadest sense. Through this project, I have started to develop a model that will help us in the areas of foundational materials, organization and methods. As examples, I covered the areas of Sunday School, elders, deacons, trustees, and music committees, using two different churches for material sources.

The models start with a questionnaire which is completed in an interview session. The gathered material is then analyzed and from the analysis of need, teaching sessions are developed. The entire program deals in areas and with methods that most pastors do not have time or resources to be able to administer themselves. The model will eventually be expanded to cover every conceivable area of church life and be presented by myself to individual churches in the form of seminars in Christian Education.

### **David E. Miller, Ministry to Homosexuals**

As homosexuality has become a more significant issue in society, so it has become an important concern for the church. The church has addressed itself effectively to the doctrinal issues relating to homosexuality, but has been weak in ministering to homosexuals in society and in the church. Ministry to homosexuals must be established upon biblical principles. Proclaiming the gospel of Christ, the church must call the homosexual to repentance, reconciliation with God, and renewal of the whole person. Ministry to homosexuals should include the attitude of redemptive concern, the declaration of the redemptive word of the Gospel, and the provision of redemptive support for the repentant homosexual.

### **David C. Pinson, Foundations In Prayer: The Vitality and Effective Importance of Prayer on Liturgy, Doctrine, and Devotion In The Pre-Nicene Church, With Ramifications For This Present Age.**

The necessity of prayer is an often neglected emphasis within our present day Churches. This was not so of those who made up the Christian Church in its first centuries. From information gleaned from outside sources, and from evidence demonstrated within prominent material from this period (Up to 325 A.D.), prayer was not only necessary, but essential to the Christian maturation and development. Leaders such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Cyprian, but to name a few, prove that prayer was crucial in the process of Christian living. As has been seen from researching, prayer must be viewed as the great forging force, through which the links of the Christian chain of life can be connected for a greater strength, and a higher calling. Greater strength comes firstly through an enriched communication with God, out of which personal piety and corporate unity become particular realities. Secondly, prayer offers a responsive means

through which the Church can be ever organized and utilized to its fullest potential. Thirdly, prayer assists in the sincere searching of each child of God, that they may grasp the precious promises of God's fundamental concepts through which doctrine speaks. Fourthly, prayer is that essential factor by which the earnest soul can become established in a daily walk with their Creator and Master, Lastly, as it was true of the Infant Church, so it can be said of today's Church, that "prayer is the necessary ingredient for positive action for God." In short, when one looks at liturgical, doctrinal, an devotional ramifications in today's congregations, it does not take long before the old adage comes to mind that "prayer changes things."

**William A. Simmons, *Paul and the Paradosis***

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss Paul's use of *Paradosis* or "tradition" in his epistles. Paul uses traditional material that was liturgical, eschatological, and christological. The Apostle applied these traditions polemically, apologetically, and catechetically. Two of the main conclusions of the work are that Paul adopted and depended upon many early Christian traditions and that many Christian doctrines were established very early in the Church.

**George F. Woodward, III, *The Western Christian Mystical Tradition as Normative Piety***

This thesis examines Western Christian mysticism particularly as expressed in the writings of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. True faith is defined as being primarily volitional and affective and as only secondarily cognitive. Christian mysticism is the exercise of faith in cultivation of intimacy with God through contemplation. Through infused grace contemplation leads to a high degree of sanctification and to the experience of volitional union with God.

The conceptual dichotomy between fact and value in modern Western thought is traced to its origin in the radical separation of faith and reason by Thomas Aquinas. Christian mysticism is presented as a desirable counter-balance to primarily cognitive perceptions of the nature of faith, and as a corrective to the fact value dichotomy that has made religious knowledge untenable to the modern world.

**Joel M. Wuliger, *Selective Conscientious Objection: And A Case For Nuclear Pacifism***

My thesis concerned itself with the question of whether Christians might lawfully participate in war or not. More specifically I dealt with the question as to whether the Christian has the biblical option to use force for the purpose of self-defense. I studied the use of the sword by the state, in the Old and New Testaments, concluding that God has delegated the right to use coercive force to the state for the purpose of deterring evil and maintaining social law and order. I developed the concept of deputization in the taking of life by created beings, concluding that God has delegated this right to end life, for punitive purposes, to the creature. I examined love as it relates to anger and hatred, retributive punishment, and the use of force. I concluded that love does not always run contrary to the exercise of anger, punishment, and the use of force, for these ought to be an image of God's own anger and judgment upon the doing of evil. Concluding that there is a biblical and righteous use of the sword, I maintain that the wielding of arms by the state is not for sinners alone. This would imply that what God might ordain as necessary is in actuality inherently evil. So

the Christian has the biblical option to bear the sword when faced with evil aggression.

In my concluding chapter I argue that, though there needs to be ethical guidelines by which war may be justly waged, the traditional "just-war" criteria becomes obsolete and inapplicable in light of modern warfare. I conclude that no war can be just when the methods of its waging are the methods of much of modern warfare—specifically nuclear, chemical, biological, and much of the automated and anti-personal weaponry. Thus I make a case for nuclear pacifism.











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## INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ISSUE

1983 marks the Centennial Anniversary of The Brethren Church. This issue is dedicated to the origin and development of this group, as well as being a proper attempt to evaluate where the denomination has been and where it is going. As the sponsoring institution of Ashland Theological Seminary and Ashland College, The Brethren Church has a long history of eclectic fellowship and educational pursuit. The diverse denominational makeup of faculty and students at ATS attests to this fact and, indeed, is a tribute to the Brethren philosophy of community and education.

Dr. Charles Munson (Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University), Dean of the Seminary and Professor of Practical Theology, delves in the first essay into the life of Henry Holsinger, a man without whom Brethren Church "history could not be written." His life was intertwined with the church split that ultimately led to a new denomination in 1883. Because Holsinger "never stood in the way of women preaching," the following article, "Brethren Women in Ministry: Century One," should not be surprising. Nevertheless, it will be to many readers. Written by Dr. Jerry Flora (Th.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), Professor of New Testament and Theology at ATS, this lucid essay lays the groundwork for future research in an area which has been virtually untapped. Dr. Flora informs us of some very active early years for women in Brethren ministry and poses some striking questions as to why this situation declined after 1915.

Dr. Dale R. Stoffer (Ph.D., Fuller Theological Seminary), pastor of Columbus Bible Fellowship, writes an excellent scholarly article, "Progressivism—A Definition," which offers a historical overview of the Brethren and points out issues that contributed to division, while defining the Progressive movement and evaluating it. This central article delineates the historical and theological perimeters of the movement. The fourth essay is that of Dr. Richard E. Allison (D. Min., ATS), Professor of Christian Education and Director of Doctoral Studies of ATS. Dr. Allison's essay on "J. Allen Miller" brings us face to face with another leading individual in The Brethren Church. We learn of Miller's influence as a president of Ashland College and as a scholar of The Brethren Church. The selection of essays is rounded off by Dr. Jack L. Oxenrider's "The Historical Role of the Brethren Elder." Dr. Oxenrider (D. Min., ATS), pastor of Jefferson Brethren Church in Goshen, Indiana, gives us a glimpse of the importance of the elder in Brethren history as well as the evolution and institutionalization of the role of the elder.

Our sermonic piece for this issue is written by a beloved preacher

and teacher in the ATS community, Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith. Former chairman of the Department of Religion at Ashland College and Professor of Biblical Studies on both the college and seminary campus, Dr. Klingensmith's challenging message, "God's Call To The Impossible," is indicative of thousands of messages he has preached in Brethren churches (as well as many other denominations) throughout the United States in fifty-six years of ministry. It is a fitting testimony to the Brethren heritage and a fitting conclusion to this volume.

David A. Rausch, **Editor**



# HENRY HOLSINGER, 1833-1905

by Charles R. Munson



Henry Holsinger

"Independent in all things neutral in nothing."<sup>1</sup> With this strong personal statement Henry Holsinger began his newspaper career, though not his printing career, in Tyrone, Pennsylvania. He set before his readers at the top of his first page an attitude and a philosophy which were to guide him until his death. He was an independent spirit throughout but he was certainly never neutral. That spirit brought him to a position of leadership in the church; it brought him separation from a church he loved. It also

thrust him to the forefront in leading a denomination whose history could not be written without his name figuring prominently.

Those who remembered him at his death in 1905 remembered him as a man who carried his early statement of principle to fulfillment. Balsbaugh said of him, ". . . It might have been said of him that the zeal he cherished had eaten him up. . . . His one theme was more work for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ and more discretion in conducting it. . . . There were other men who believed as he did on the questions at issue. There were other men of ability who were his compeers in the ministry. There were other men of equal courage of convictions. But it fell to Brother Holsinger to bring the man and the opportunity together which marked an epoch in the history of the Brethren."<sup>2</sup>

Who was this man who, perhaps more than any others, precipitated the division of the German Baptist Church in 1881 and following, a church which had existed since its founding in 1708 in Germany? What were the internal forces which motivated him and kept him in the forefront of turmoil?

Holsinger had a strong church background: his father and grandfather were preachers, and he was a grandson of a great-grandmother of Alexander Mack, Jr., one of the founders of the church. Despite that, he says that he was a "little wild in our time,"<sup>3</sup> and he regrets that he "remained outside of the Church" for a period of his youth. He admits, "The only cause of regret that I have experienced is that I did not start out sooner and keep closer to the path."<sup>4</sup> He was baptized into the Tunker Church in 1855, at Clover Creek, Pennsylvania, elected to the ministry in 1866, ordained to the eldership in 1880,<sup>5</sup> and then elevated to the office of bishop.<sup>6</sup>

And after a very brief life review he asks a question and answers aright, "The remainder of my history, is it not written in the Chronicles of the Church?"<sup>7</sup> Indeed it was.

The publishing business, education, and the church provided almost equal motivation to Henry; perhaps the church was primary. He began rather early in the printing business, working as an apprentice under Henry Kurtz in Poland, Ohio, where the *Gospel Visitor*, a church paper, was published. Holsinger wanted Kurtz to make the paper a weekly publication; and when Kurtz rejected the idea, Holsinger went back to his home in Morrison's Cove, Pennsylvania, where he taught school and worked as a farmer.<sup>8</sup> Sometime in 1865 or earlier he moved to Tyrone, Pennsylvania, where he published the *Christian Family Companion*, thus turning his real interests into practically.

While in Tyrone he purchased a newspaper office and established the *Tyrone Herald*.<sup>9</sup> But the newspaper was not his real desire; instead he preferred to direct a religious paper. The *Christian Family Companion* combined his publishing desires with his Christian convictions. He says of this publishing venture. "A free rostrum was announced for the discussion of all subjects pertaining to the welfare of the church."<sup>10</sup> Henry Holsinger had an overwhelming desire to inform the church and to let the church speak to its own issues. Thus, in his very first religious publishing venture he allowed a "free rostrum" to provide that forum. "I do not believe," he said, "that the press is the most effective medium for the spreading of these truths. I am persuaded, that for the present at least, it is the most expedient. This may be accepted as one of the motives that has originated this publication."<sup>11</sup>

His zeal was expressed as the paper developed and as he recounted how seriously the church was in "need of reformation."<sup>12</sup> He never imagined that his avid desire for a church paper and what he believed to be the benefits of the same would ultimately contribute so greatly to a division he abhorred. He says of his early recollection of the paper, "I distinctly remember my emotions on first sight and handling of our church paper [*Gospel Visitor*], and with what interest I read every column."<sup>13</sup>

In 1870 Holsinger began *The Pious Youth*, a sixteen-page weekly. He wanted to supply "our youth with reading matter adapted to their special wants, in language that would be pure, and in ways that would be interesting and helpful."<sup>14</sup> The year 1878 saw the beginning of *The Progressive Christian*, perhaps the most controversial of all his publications. Its avowed purpose was also to allow a "free rostrum" and to advance ideas which at least Henry thought would be beneficial to the church. Holsinger and J.W. Beer were responsible for the paper but they disagreed on how radical

the paper ought to be, Holsinger favoring a more radical, progressive nature. When Beer bought out Holsinger and could not make the paper succeed, Holsinger bought it back and proceeded to make it more "progressive" than ever. It was the publication of this paper which ultimately led to Holsinger's basic problems, for all issues were publicly "aired" through this medium.

But publishing was not Holsinger's main concern, though he did call it "my favorite profession."<sup>15</sup> The Church was really at the heart of Henry Holsinger's life; publishing was only a means to an end. He saw the church in need of reform and advancement in order to "keep pace with the times." To him and to others it was essential that the church meet the challenges of the day. It meant an "onward, a forward movement, in the right direction. To be still a little plainer: a movement by the direction of God's Word. . . . Our motto is: Go on and seek to know the Lord, and practice what you know."<sup>16</sup>

He wanted the church to be firmly based on the Bible and that required always a more careful understanding of the Scriptures. For instance, "We come a little nearer obeying the ordinance of feet washing, according to the example of Christ, as we learn where we could do so, by our improved facilities for learning and understanding the word of God. . . . The Savior does not command us to wipe one another's feet except in the example, and the expression 'do as I have done to you.' Therefore we wash and wipe one another's feet. But the Savior does not say either by precept or example, that we should salute one another with a kiss immediately after we have washed one another's feet; therefore, it is not required of us to do so by authority of God's word. And as it was not so done by Christ and the apostles when the ordinance was instituted, we hold that it would be progressing nearer to the word of God by omitting the salutation at the time of feetwashing. We would give honor to God's word, and also to God's silence."<sup>17</sup>

For Holsinger the church had to be the church by being close to the Bible or moving closer to it. The "Bible alone" principle was a paramount issue with him. If something was not stated in the Bible it was not valid for the church. When the division approached, he reflected on what he called "their bundle of nearly 3,000 decisions—laws which they made themselves." This he refuted by saying, ". . . if your creed contains more than the Gospel, it is adding to it; if it contains less, it is taking from it; if it is the same, leave it in it. If it is something different, we don't want it. They can not show a particle of gospel authority for hundreds of these mandates."<sup>18</sup>

He believed, as he said, "My church right or wrong. When it is right to keep it right, and when it is wrong to be made right."<sup>19</sup> "I



believe the Church is right, and its sentiments are true, but individual members may be wrong. Let us 'prove all things and hold fast to that which is good!'"<sup>20</sup> His church, as it became after the division, was the true church, he said, because they (Old Order and Conservatives) "hear the gospel interpreted through the church and we hear the church defined through the gospel. We accept the gospel as it says; they [Old Order and Conservatives] as AM [Annual Meeting] interprets it."<sup>21</sup> In sum the church was being divided, according to Holsinger, because the church was acting out of principles that went beyond the gospel. It was not only that the church refused to incorporate the advances he urged, but that they went further than the gospel would allow.

Holsinger's position was ". . . that things that are not revealed, however convenient and useful they may be, are not essential for salvation; hence, we will let the churches decide those things for themselves, for they are not essential to salvation. Whenever the Lord has commanded us to cross Fox river there we will find the bridge, and wherever we do not find the bridge there we need not cross the river."<sup>22</sup> Therefore, church practices which became hardened and mandatory and unsupported by Scripture were not valid. For example, on the question of forward or backward baptism, Holsinger was asked, "Who should decide?" His reply was direct: "It would not matter who decided it for it is not essential to salvation. . . . But our custom is to baptize while kneeling and by forward motion. . . ."<sup>23</sup> He would conclude then that the acts are by custom. He considered the Lord's Supper in the same manner: ". . . the gospel has not specified it [the nature of it], and therefore it is not essential."<sup>24</sup> "Where God's word is plain we will obey and where he is silent we will be silent, and thus we will honor his silence as well as his word."<sup>25</sup> Again he says, ". . . let us all be united in giving entire liberty in matters not taught in the Gospel."<sup>26</sup> In a discussion over the cut of a certain brother's coat, Holsinger asks: "Where do we find that order? Is it in the Bible? No, but Annual Meeting made that order, and it has no right to make rules where the Bible is silent."<sup>27</sup> Thus, for Holsinger, a true church acts on the basis of strict Gospel mandates and not on what he called "man-made" mandates. Those on both sides of the question were trying to learn how to face the world; they differed only on how to do it.

Holsinger was also keenly interested in education, though he had only had a "common school education."<sup>28</sup> As with his printing interests, so with his educational interests, he believed that "the leadership of the church must be informed and educated." He lamented the fact that so many of the persons in leadership could not read or write. He could, he said, ". . . even now close my eyes and name a dozen churches with whose elders I was personally ac-



quainted who could not read intelligently a chapter from the Bible or a hymn from a hymnbook, nor write an intelligent notice or announcement for a communion meeting for the paper."<sup>29</sup> Such positions of leadership carry more responsibility than to be simply pious, "... it bears with it a fitness to teach and a capability to use sound doctrine, to exhort and to convince gainsayers. And even more so accordingly to the usages of the church and in religious literature."<sup>30</sup>

So Holsinger advocated education and gave it his full support. He coveted for others what he himself did not have, except a self-education. "He had been a school teacher in Bedford County and was successful with young people. He was a most persuasive preacher and very well read. He was an extensive traveler in the United States and visited the Land of our Lord. This he felt he must do in order to understand what he was reading and preaching from God's Word."<sup>31</sup> Undoubtedly this rather extensive self-study made him, what A.L. Garber, onetime editor of the *Evangelist*, called a person with "... ponderous reasoning powers."<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps his own lack of education made him zealous for it in others. Well known is his advocacy for Sunday schools, but beyond that he was a prominent individual in an enterprise to establish in Berlin, Pennsylvania, a "school of higher grade."<sup>33</sup> The plan was to raise \$100,000 to establish the school. In less than 10 days almost \$20,000 was raised. A total of \$60,000 was raised by S. Z. Sharp and Holsinger, but the total amount was never reached and the school at Berlin never materialized.

The most taxing of his efforts on behalf of education came in his efforts to save Ashland College from bankruptcy. This was an extremely trying time for him. He spent more than two years trying to raise \$20,000 to pay off an indebtedness. Something of his spirit emerges as he says, "This is my last call. I feel that I have done my full duty both to the college cause and in the way of admonishing you to your duty. I have a good conscience toward God and man. I have sacrificed my favorite profession and the comforts of home to myself and family, have given over two years of my time, have subscribed one hundred dollars toward paying the debt, and am over eighty dollars short on traveling expenses. . . . I have visited all the churches once and some twice. I have not courage left to go again, and could not afford to do it if I had."<sup>34</sup> It was his most discouraging time. He encountered men with money who would not support the cause and it angered him, primarily because he had sacrificed so much himself. But he fulfilled the "duty" that was all important to him.

Yet, despite his efforts to establish or maintain a college, he did not believe that everyone should go to college. He lamented the sad

intellectual state of pastors before and after the division of the church. And though he spoke often to college graduating classes, and though he became president of the Board of Trustees of Ashland College, he hesitated to recommend college for every pastor. In 1902 he observed "that many of the congregations have left the old method of calling ministers from among the laity, depending entirely on importation of their help in that line of service. . . . Call your own congregation together and give the members an opportunity to select from their own 'rank and file' those whom they would have to serve them. . . . In congregations where the rule is continued there is no lack of ministers. . . . I also see that some churches depend on the college to supply them with preachers. That, too is an error that will eventually ruin the denomination if persisted in. . . . Ashland College is simply an institution of learning, to which those who have been called to the ministry by the church, may be sent to be taught the things pertaining to the duties required of them, providing the congregation that called them deems it prudent to do so. All men do not require a college education to preach the gospel. Some are hindered by a course. Each congregation will know what is best for the servant whom she has called into her service."<sup>35</sup> But as he says, "I never could see that education was a dangerous thing, and had a great thirsting for more of it. I always preferred to hear a man preach who knew more than myself."<sup>36</sup>

When P. J. Brown commented on William Spanogle's assessment of progress brought about by Holsinger's policies, he said, "Brother Spanogle has abundantly shown that brother Holsinger has led the advance guard in every movement tending toward the upholding of a higher type of intelligence in our ministry, and Brotherhood in general, and toward the breaking down of tradition, ignorance and superstition. . . ."<sup>37</sup>

Holsinger recalled with displeasure a situation where conforming to the order of dress was more important than being able to be educated to preach properly. Speaking of a man of high importance who gave his preference regarding learning or conforming to the "order" he says, "If he were required to give the casting vote between two brethren with equal qualification as to spirituality and moral character, the one a man of learning and a preacher of eloquence, but who did not conform to the order in wearing his hair and clothing, and another who did conform to the order but could not preach, he would unhesitatingly accept the latter."<sup>38</sup> It was the holding of such attitudes which prodded Holsinger to react and, one could say, attack.

Holsinger would have chosen, without question, the man with the education. He never questioned "The Ancient customs of the

church;" they "should be respected,"<sup>39</sup> he said; but he wanted them not to stand on an equality with the Word of God. And he didn't want the "customs" to stand in the way of education, which he felt was necessary to meet the challenges of the day. It was this advocacy that led him and others to question the organization of the church and its authority structure. He found some of the leadership opposed to that view and to what appeared as a disregard for the "orders of the church." Quite the contrary for Holsinger, education was in order; the customs of the church were in order; but neither was in order if it broke with the "gospel alone" principle.

True, Holsinger was a churchman, a publisher, an advocate of education, but he was also a pastor-preacher. His record is replete with dedication sermons preached, college baccalaureate sermons delivered, pastorates held, and free-lance preaching in a variety of places.

He recalls his first pastorate, while responding to a brother despondent over his own first pastorate and not winning one sinner to repent: "I had the same trouble to contend with, and was wonderfully tempted to quit. In addition to my own trouble, I had in my employ at the time a Baptist minister who shared his temptation with me." The Baptist preacher suggested that both of them quit preaching, and Henry responded, "I have no doubt. . . but that our weak effort to do right may be leading someone in the good way we are trying to point out. And so if I hold out faithful to the end, I will be sure of saving at least one soul by preaching the gospel, and one for whom I could have no assurance if I had not preached. And that one soul is worth more to me than the whole world. And so from that time on I did my best in preaching the word and left the results with the Lord."<sup>40</sup>

His attitude toward preaching is that it should be, as he called it, "distinctive preaching," meaning from both testaments. He says, "I seldom get too much Gospel distinctiveness. . . . These principles [here he means Hebrews 6] should receive the special attention of every pastor . . . at least once a year at every appointment in his charge. . . . I especially love to hear a good solid sermon on the subject of repentance during revival services. There is no subject better calculated to break up the great fountain of every sinner's true inwardness than that of repentance from dead work. . . ."<sup>41</sup>

While not many of Holsinger's sermons are available there are enough to know that he appears to have been an orderly preacher. "Give us plain, logical arguments," he urged, "based upon the evident teaching of the Gospel, written in the spirit of love, so we may hope to win those who may be of contrary opinion." In addition he asked that the sermons not be in "controversial form."<sup>42</sup> His were not. Albert Trent, Holsinger's secretary for his so-called Berlin



trial, recorded a message of his on "Perfection." He defines the term, gives numerous illustrations, then uses Biblical examples, after which he gives examples of Christian characteristics. He then urges his hearers to redouble their efforts "in pressing onward in the Christian life. "I desire to make my sermons practical. . . . I want that you should desire to excel, not that you should take advantage of your brethren, but that you may become more holy, more truthful, more honest, and more sincere. . . ."43 With a few more illustrations and a brief conclusion he leaves his audience to ponder his message. He gives every evidence of being orderly, not only in his preparation, but also in his delivery. Certainly he must have had ability to have been called upon to preach so often.

Interestingly enough, he never opposed women preachers. Upon hearing Annie Shaw preach in San Jose, he remarked, "I heard Miss Annie Shaw preach an excellent sermon . . . I am glad I never stood in the way of women preaching, and that I belong to a church that assists them in doing so."<sup>44</sup>

As a pastor he was held in high regard with much appreciation. His own attitude was that a pastor "should locate among his people, be ordained as their pastor, take charge of the church and minister to all their number, supported by them, accountable to them, and watching over them. Then he can and may be their pastor."<sup>45</sup> While pastoring in South Bend, Indiana, he said, "I manage to run away sometimes week days, when strongly pressed and that at the risk of my health." But there, as well as elsewhere, he found "the relation of pastor and people a very pleasant one indeed, and in our case it will be hard to sever; but my father used to say . . . 'love binds and love relieves.' "<sup>46</sup>

But it was in Berlin where he received his support during his most trying times. He might also have been his busiest there. On one occasion in Berlin he borrowed a carriage, took his wife and made a sentimental journey. He reflected, "It appeared very much like old times, when we used to traverse these hills and valleys in our pastoral duties. We passed but few places at which I had not served in some capacity of pastoral services, solemnizing marriages, serving funerals, or anointing and visiting the sick."<sup>47</sup> He always seemed to remember his times in the pastorates as good times, whether in California, or Indiana, or Kansas, or Nebraska, or Pennsylvania or anywhere else. He never recalls struggles with local congregations, only with the leadership of the large body. It is hard to imagine him not being outspoken in a local situation, but he must not have been. Of his experiences in the pastorate he says, "I worked along without jarring with the congregations in which I lived or the officers under whom I served for more than fifteen years."<sup>48</sup>



Holsinger's reflection of his own life in his later years is rather harsh. He ponders the friends he has and says, "I thank God that I have many good friends in this world, if I have not much money. But it is beginning to be a mystery to me how I came to have them and to hold them, unamiable, outspoken, sarcastic and austere, as I feel myself to have been."<sup>49</sup> There were many, not his friends, who would have agreed with his statement wholeheartedly.

In a less critical mood he said, "I wish I had another life, better life, purer life." He never regretted "any sacrifice I made for Jesus."<sup>50</sup> "I care more to please God," he said, "than I do to please men, in gratifying a friend or appeasing a foe."<sup>51</sup> One who reviewed the life of Holsinger and reflected on the criticism that Henry abused the Brethren, remarked, ". . . I learned that what he [the critic] saw proper to call abuse was only [Holsinger's] calling things by their right names."<sup>52</sup>

Undoubtedly it was his candor which brought him his troubles, for he took a different view of confrontation or argument. He would say, "Why can't we argue without getting angry?" "Agitation," he would say, "is the natural purifier. Nothing betrays the weakness of a cause so much as to have it shrink from investigation."<sup>53</sup> In that sense Holsinger felt he was right in probing the church, but he paid a price. He would have to say, thinking of others, ". . . they were not handled as roughly as we were, nor do they deserve to be."<sup>54</sup> He seemed to sense that his forthright nature was costly, though he doesn't appear ever to regret the course he had followed. He said of himself, "We are never too proud to acknowledge a fault or recall an error."<sup>55</sup>

Seemingly that willingness to admit a fault or error allowed Holsinger to be outspoken. When a contributor to his paper wrote and asked why his article was not printed, Henry replied, "You didn't give your full name; we do not wish to discuss that issue now; and because there was nothing in it."<sup>56</sup>

At times Holsinger appears very naive. Once he was asked to open with prayer the Quinter-Mitchell debate on baptism. He says, "I asked the Lord, in my opening prayer, for a special blessing on Brother Quinter, that he might be enabled to successfully defend the truth. And in order to show impartiality, I offered a prayer also for Mr. Mitchell, that the Lord would give him light to see his error and accept of the better way." He adds, "My prayer evidently irritated Mr. Mitchell's natural and acquired evenness of temper, as was manifest in his speeches during the day."<sup>57</sup> Holsinger admitted that this was improper, as he reflected on it later, but there was an innocence about him. As one described him he said, ". . . his childlike nature forbade diplomacy and he hated truckling to ignorant prejudices. . . . It was not possible in human nature for an

element so hostile to entrenched power to remain at peace within the fold. . . ."<sup>58</sup> He seems often to have spoken his heart to the detriment of himself and the persons receiving.

Speaking as openly as he did he expected others to respond similarly. He asked that it be in love, saying, "In reasoning upon these subjects let the Brethren set forth an example that will confirm our profession of loving one another."<sup>59</sup> He seems honestly to have a desire to carry out that same theme in some statements in his own written history of the church, though that certainly is not universally true. In writing of the German Baptist part of the division he remarks, "in the item of mission it is astonishing to notice the progress the German Baptist denomination has made during the last decade. I can truly say that I rejoice in their progress. . . ."<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps no one sums up the nature of Holsinger better than the editor of the *Evangelist*, A. L. Garber, who wrote in response to an editorial from Henry criticizing Garber for not placing his name as editor in the periodical. Garber responds that it is his business what he does with his name and then reflects on Holsinger: "There is no person in the Brethren church for whom I have more sympathy than for Brother Henry R. Holsinger. This is because he has great excesses and deficiencies in his mental organization, with a burning desire to do the best he can for the comfort, happiness and enjoyment of all our people in earth and eternity. But to attain this righteous end, his mental excesses and deficiencies cause him . . . to do that which he would not, and that he would do he does not . . . . Brother Holsinger is born for the field of contest. The combative element is strong in his nature, but his peace sentiments are also strong, and consequently he is never satisfied with himself."<sup>61</sup>

Garber continues: "Bro. Holsinger is a man of great benevolence and devotion. He will do anything for a friend. . . . His devotion and disposition to sacrifice self are noble traits of his character. . . . His sympathy for the distressed is great, and his hand and substance are ever ready to administer to their wants. We have this highest opinion of his devotion to duty, his kindness and generosity, his sterling integrity, thorough honesty, and conscientious desire to do his duty before God and man."<sup>62</sup> It must be remembered that this is a response to a criticism to the author of the statements. While in total it is not without its own criticism, it is still quite a testimony to Holsinger.

People did love Henry Holsinger. When his friend Howard Miller reviewed Henry's life he said, "Before Henry grew helpless I advised him to make a tour of the old church. I wish that he had done so. Animosity had died out, and he would have had the time of his life among his one-time friends. One reason for that is the fact that Henry Holsinger was as honest as the day is long."<sup>63</sup>

He seemed to have had special graces which attracted women to him. Some of the women of Pennsylvania made him a silk quilt. He requested that it be placed on his casket and then returned to them after the funeral. One sister remarked, following his receipt of the quilt, that, "brother Holsinger cast a gloom over the donation service by his doleful reference to his funeral." Holsinger replied that he had come to "dread the grave as little as my bed."<sup>64</sup> And it was the women of the church who raised a pension fund for him. When he thanks the sisters in print, he includes a remark from a man present when the fund was raised. His reference to Henry reflects the sentiment of the women and Holsinger. "If you could have heard" he says, "all the loving things which were said about you, you would have concluded that instead of being forgotten by your brethren, as some pretenders tried to make you believe, you have more true friends and admirers in the Brethren church now than at any other previous period in your useful life. The statement was confirmed and emphasized by the secretary and treasurer in their official announcement of the donation."<sup>65</sup>

It was once recommended that a monument be erected somewhere near Ashland to Henry Holsinger, in the form of an "Old Folks Home." That never materialized. But perhaps a monument stands as one reflects on his life and work. He gave his life to a church which still exists, a church, in its broadest sense, which has incorporated all the advances Henry once advocated. Had he been more subtle, more patient perhaps, things would have been different. But, as one friend said of him, "Holsinger was not a politician. He was an idealist. He did not concern himself with the infinite details of a siege progressing step by step, but charged straight for the citadel. . . . If there was one trait of character which was so strong as to be a weakness, it was his uncompromising spirit. Yet, before the Annual Meeting which expelled him, he made extreme concessions to avoid division, but not such as would compromise his principles."<sup>66</sup>

"If God hates a quitter how He must have loved Henry Holsinger. Nor was he a good waiter." As one said of him, "To brother Henry R. Holsinger belongs the honor of being the first to point out to the church her larger duty. He saw that she was not meeting the Master's thought of the Church's mission in the world. Others may have seen this larger duty with him; some few before his day may have seen it, but he was first to publish it abroad. It was a tremendous conviction that grew upon him. He was restive under it. He had to give it expression. He did, and he suffered. Suffered as the prophet suffers. Thank God he lived to see the day when practically the whole Church sees the same vision."<sup>67</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>*The Tyrone Herald*, Volume I, No. 3, August 23, 1867.

<sup>2</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume XXVII, No. 13, March 29, 1905.

<sup>3</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume XXI, No. 39, October 4, 1899.

<sup>4</sup>*Christian Family Companion*, Volume I, No. 4 (Tyrone City, PA: October, 1864).

<sup>5</sup>Henry R. Holsinger, *Holsinger's History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 491.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 472.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 472. Holsinger says he purchased the newspaper in 1863 but the newspaper itself is dated 1867. Since he kept the paper for only 18 months he could not have purchased it in 1863 and still be publishing in 1867. It appears to be a lapse of memory; yet he says it was during "the darkest days of the rebellion," and since that would have been prior to 1867, he could hardly have confused that.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 473.

<sup>11</sup>*Christian Family Companion*, Volume I, No. 2, October 4, 1864, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, p. 473.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 470.

<sup>14</sup>*Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1909), p. 348.

<sup>15</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume VIII, No. 43, October 27, 1888.

<sup>16</sup>*Progressive Christian*, Volume III, No. 10, 1881, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, Volume IV, No. 26, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume XVI, No. 10, p. 113.

<sup>20</sup>*Christian Family Companion*, Volume I, No. 3, p. 28.

<sup>21</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume VI, No. 18, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup>*Progressive Christian*, Volume III, No. 11, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, No. 14, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, p. 470.



- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 474.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 475.
- <sup>31</sup>Cooper, H. A., *Two Centuries of Brothersvalley* (Westminister, MD: Times, Inc., 1962), p. 295.
- <sup>32</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume VIII, No. 40.
- <sup>33</sup>*Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren*, p. 319.
- <sup>34</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume VIII, No. 43, p. 14.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., Volume XXIV, No. 20, p. 16.
- <sup>36</sup>Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, p. 3.
- <sup>37</sup>Albert T. Ronk, *History of the Brethren Church* (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Company, 1968), p. 134.
- <sup>38</sup>Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, p. 475.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 486.
- <sup>40</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume XX, No. 31, p. 7.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., Volume XXII, No. 19, p. 13.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., Volume VIII, No. 22 p. 12.
- <sup>43</sup>*Progressive Christian*, Volume III, No. 31.
- <sup>44</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume XVII, No. 23, p. 8.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid., Volume X, No. 3, p. 6.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume VIII, No. 3, p. 4.
- <sup>48</sup>Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, p. 3.
- <sup>49</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume XVII, No. 18, p. 6.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., Volume VIII, No. 13, p. 8.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., Volume IX, No. 34, p. 9.
- <sup>52</sup>Ibid., Volume VI, No. 15, p. 11.
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid., Volume XVII, No. 28, p. 7.
- <sup>54</sup>*The Pilgrim*, Volume VII, No. 3.
- <sup>55</sup>*Christian Family Companion*, Volume IV, No. 33, p. 322.
- <sup>56</sup>Ibid., Volume VI, No. 23, p. 220.
- <sup>57</sup>Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, p. 384.
- <sup>58</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume XXVII, No. 13, p. 2.
- <sup>59</sup>*Christian Family Companion*, Volume I, No. 2, p. 3.
- <sup>60</sup>Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, p. 273.
- <sup>61</sup>*Brethren Evangelist*, Volume VIII, No. 40, p. 6.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., Volume XXVII, No. 13, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Volume XX, No. 42, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., Volume XXVII, No. 13, p. 7.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

# BRETHREN WOMEN IN MINISTRY: CENTURY ONE

by Jerry R. Flora



*Top row (l-r): Laura Grossnickle Hedrick, Sadie Gibbons Evalson, Mary M. Sterling. Bottom row (l-r): Clara Myers Flora, Lovina Young Meyers, Mary Wagoner Bauman.*

The purpose of this article is to introduce a chapter of Brethren history that has not yet been written. The material is sketchy and at times inadequate, but the subject is of continuing interest. Other students of the Brethren past—even knowing some of the story firsthand—did not write it, apparently because their interests lay elsewhere. But the time has come to attempt a beginning at recovering the evidence and reconstructing the picture. And so, uneven and incomplete as it may be, this essay intends to introduce those women of the Brethren Church who have participated in the church's official ministry.<sup>1</sup>

When the German Baptists divided in 1881 and 1882, the Progressives who formed the Brethren Church (1883) found themselves confronting a cluster of issues on "the woman question": May a woman in the communion service receive the bread and the

cup from another woman, or must she take them from the hand of a man (whether elder or deacon)?<sup>2</sup> What is the role of women in the teaching and evangelistic activities of the church? Must women wear a prayer cap or veil and, if so, when and for what reasons?<sup>3</sup> What of the temperance movement, led largely by women (especially Frances E. Willard of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union)? May congregations elect deaconesses as well as deacons and, if so, should the women be ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands like the men?<sup>4</sup> What of the woman suffrage movement with its specific goal of giving women the right to vote in political elections?<sup>5</sup> Similarly, what privileges and responsibilities are open to them in the life of the church? In particular, may women be ordained to the ministry and serve as pastors of congregations?<sup>6</sup>

Henry R. Holsinger, the leading spokesman of the Brethren Church in the period following 1883, wrote at the age of sixty-two, "I am glad I never stood in the way of women preaching, and that I belong to a church that assists them in doing so."<sup>7</sup> How did the church assist? Not only by personal and tangible support as the women organized to underwrite the infant outreach efforts, but also by formally encouraging them to enter the ministry. For example, the 1890 Michigan district conference included in its resolutions this statement: "6. Women are eligible to the office of minister or deacon from the following scriptures: Acts 2:18; 8:1-4; 15:32; 18:26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Cor. 3:17."<sup>8</sup> In the next year the Indiana conference, not to be outdone, adopted the following: "*Resolved*, that we extend the hand of welcome to our sisters to enter the ministerial field when possessing the necessary qualifications."<sup>9</sup> The Illiokota conference of the same year (1891) included in its decisions a motion ". . . that no distinction be made in representative bodies of the church on the basis of sex."<sup>10</sup>

A fourth district, Pennsylvania, adopted this statement in 1892: "*Resolved*: That we regard woman's work as essential to the salvation of the world, and that her divine mission is the same as man's."<sup>11</sup> The Ohio district conference of 1894 heard their Committee on Woman's Work report, "The sisters certainly feel the pressing need of more ministers in the Brethren church [sic] and realizing this fact we deem the preparation of young men and women for the ministry of first importance in extending the missionary cause and promoting the best interests of the church."<sup>12</sup> And the General Conference of 1893, just ten years after the new denomination began, took the following position: "*Resolved*, That this convention recognizes and appreciates the force of the expression in Holy Writ: 'There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ.'"<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the Brethren Church in the first dozen years of its life went on record through its leading spokesman, district and na-



tional conferences as favoring the equality of men and women in the church and the inclusion of women in the ranks of pastors and missionaries.

Who were the women who responded and were acknowledged by the Brethren? We give here a roster of those who have been recognized as ministers and/or have served for any length of time as pastors in the century of the Brethren Church's existence. Little is known of some of these, but what has been gleaned up to this point is presented here for the sake of the record. (Numbers in parentheses indicate their position in the chronological description which follows.)

Emma Aboud (28)	Grace Fetters (24)	Edna Nicholas (30)
Mary Wagoner Bauman (8)	Clara Myers Flora (5)	Catherine Parker (9)
Bertha Bell (19)	Florence Newberry Gribble (25)	Mary Pence (27)
Anne Black (33)	Alice Harley (13)	Jennifer Jones Ray (37)
Cora Jean Black (35)	Laura Grossnickle Hedrick (2)	Mrs. J. B. Richard (17)
Etta Warvel Bowman (20)	Margaret Hoover (15)	Mrs. T. E. Richards (18)
Loretta Carrithers (32)	Mary Hoover (16)	Mary Sparks (34)
Margaret Cooke (21)	Susan White Hyland (38)	Grace Srack (29)
Nora Bracken Davis (26)	Mrs. P. J. Jennings (22)	Mary Sterling (1)
Vianna Detwiler (12)	Laura Larson (31)	Etta Tombaugh (6)
Esther Dickey (3)	Jenny Loi (36)	Antonia Walker (11)
Ada Garber Drushal (14)	Lizzie Masters (4)	Maude Cripe Webb (23)
Sadie Gibbons Evalson (7)	Lovina Young Meyers (10)	

(1) The first woman to be ordained in the Brethren Church was **MARY MALINDA STERLING** (1859-1933), a native and longtime resident of Masontown, Pennsylvania. She was converted during a revival at twelve years of age and was the youngest of seventeen persons baptized on December 30, 1871. She began to teach at nineteen and continued until she was twenty-two, studying meanwhile at Monongahela College, from which she graduated (B.A., 1882). At that time she became a charter member of the Masontown Brethren Church, then went to Ashland, Ohio, where she taught on the Ashland College faculty in 1883 and 1884. She later received the Master of Arts degree from Monongahela College (1887).

When the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor (after 1919, the Woman's Missionary Society) was established by the General Conference of 1887, Mary Sterling became its first president, continuing in that office until the reorganization of the society five years later. The trustees of the S.S.C.E. called her to the ministry in 1889, and the Masontown congregation confirmed that initiative by unanimous vote. She was ordained at her home church in 1890 and began a vigorous period of ministerial service. During the eleven years 1889-1900, she preached 1,157 sermons and brought into the Brethren Church seventy-eight persons, forty-eight of them

receiving baptism at her hand.<sup>14</sup>

A measure of her reception in the denomination may be inferred from her being asked to preach the Sunday morning sermon during the 1894 General Conference.<sup>15</sup> She also wrote from time to time for *The Brethren Evangelist*<sup>16</sup> and in 1895 served as state evangelist for the Brethren churches of Pennsylvania.<sup>17</sup> She was pastor of the Masontown congregation early in the twentieth century and, in addition, did evangelistic work in New Jersey and West Virginia.<sup>18</sup> Her name appears in the ministerial list of *The Brethren Annual* every year from 1892 until 1933, when her death came on May 25 at the age of seventy-three. One who did not agree with her kind of service still described Mary Sterling as "a remarkable woman, . . . a splendid leader . . . ." <sup>19</sup>

(2) Those same phrases could be used as well of LAURA E. N. GROSSNICKLE HEDRICK (1858-1934), a native of Mapleville, Maryland, about midway between Boonsboro and Smithsburg. There at the age of ten she slipped into an empty church building on the way home from school in order to kneel and surrender her life to Christ. Four years later she revealed her decision and was baptized in October 1872. She began to teach school at age seventeen and taught for thirteen years in the state of Maryland, becoming the first woman in Washington County to hold a first grade and first class teaching certificate.<sup>20</sup> She also was a charter member of the Mapleville Brethren Church. When the Fairview congregation west of South Bend, Indiana, called her to become their pastor in 1891, Mapleville hesitated to ordain her. On the way to Fairview she attended the Ohio district conference where she was ordained, then continued to Fairview where she pastored for three years (1891-94).

During this time her obvious abilities became increasingly known. She was invited to preach the Tuesday evening sermon at the 1892 General Conference held at Warsaw, Indiana. Three days later, at the Friday morning session, she delivered an address to the delegates on "Woman's Work in the Church."<sup>21</sup> Following her address the conference was moved to act: "*Resolved: That this National Convention extends to the sisters all privileges which the brethren claim for themselves.*"<sup>22</sup> Six weeks later she spoke to the Illiokota conference at Lanark, Illinois, on "How Shall the Brethren Church Attain a Higher Standard of Spirituality?"<sup>23</sup> And the next spring she preached to the Indiana Ministerial Association in their meeting at Mexico, Indiana.<sup>24</sup> She was secretary of the board of directors of the National Brethren Ministerial Association during 1892-93<sup>25</sup> and also contributed frequently to *The Brethren Evangelist*.<sup>26</sup>

Following her Fairview pastorate, she became the (third) na-

tional president of the Sister's Society of Christian Endeavor (1894-98) and, because of her talents and energy, they sent her among the churches for six months as a field organizer. In that time she visited twenty-seven congregations, twenty former societies, and organized thirty-eight new groups.<sup>27</sup>

In January 1898, Laura Grossnickle married George W. Hedrick, a widower of Dayton, Virginia, and she served as pastor of the Brethren Church there for several years. The Hedricks lived in Dayton until 1910, when her husband's asthma required a move to Hallandale, Florida, their home until her death at the age of seventy-six on August 7, 1934. Twenty-three years later she was the subject of a major two-part article in *The Brethren Evangelist*—the only ordained Brethren woman to be so honored.<sup>28</sup>

(3) Several other women are listed as ministers in the Brethren Church during the 1890s, although not so much is known of their lives and service. ESTHER L. DICKEY is one of these. *The Brethren Annual* recorded her as being at Bourbon, Indiana, in 1892, and at Sidney, Indiana, in 1893 and 1894. In addition to her pastoral service she, together with Laura Grossnickle, was included among the Indiana pastors "who did mission work outside of their own charge . . . in the plan to aid weak churches."<sup>29</sup> Problems developed, however, in her disagreement with the Brethren attitude toward "worldly conformity," and Mrs. Dickey withdrew from the denomination.<sup>30</sup> (4) Also active in the ministry at this period was LIZZIE MASTERS, who served the Elkport, Iowa, congregation according to *The Brethren Annual* for 1893-99.

(5) CLARA MYERS FLORA (b. 1850), like Esther Dickey, first appears in the ministerial list for 1892. She was born in Illinois and married Noah A. Flora (b. 1846) of Virginia in 1868. The couple united with the German Baptist Church in 1870, of which he became a minister in 1875. They transferred, however, to the Brethren Church in 1886 "from choice of conviction."<sup>31</sup> Clara Flora was called to the ministry in 1892 and from that time actively engaged in preaching and evangelistic work. Writing at the turn of the century, H. R. Holsinger observed that she performed all the duties of pastoral ministry including baptism, marriages, and funerals, preaching an average of eleven sermons per month.<sup>32</sup>

Her recorded ministry was at Dallas Center, Iowa (1892-1900), and Des Moines, Iowa (1901-16). While at the former church she served as "vice-president" of the Illiokota district in 1897 and 1898.<sup>33</sup> In the early years of the twentieth century *The Brethren Annual* listed her as a missionary-evangelist (1904-07). One example of this activity is the notice from 1904 that she had preached a four-week revival at Lake Odessa, Michigan, and at the time of reporting was engaged in another meeting at Hudson, Iowa.<sup>34</sup> It is



significant that in no ministerial list does her name appear without that of her husband; they are listed in *The Brethren Annual* from 1892 through 1916. Their style of ministry was described by Holsinger when he wrote of the Appanoose [Udell], Iowa, church, "Brother and Sister Noah Flora of Des Moines, Iowa, are the present pastors, who preach alternately twice each month."<sup>35</sup>

(6) ETTA TOMBAUGH of Rochester, Indiana, appears in the ministerial lists of *The Brethren Annual* for 1894-98. (7) Beginning at the same time, SADIE A. GIBBONS EVALSON served in pastoral capacity at Waterloo, Iowa (1894); Chicago, Illinois (1895-1900); Independence, Kansas (1900-03); Leon, Iowa (1903-09); Portis, Kansas (1909-13); and St. Joseph, Missouri (1913-20). Her notice in the denomination at large began when, at the 1896 General Conference, she was ordained to be assistant pastor of the Brethren mission in Chicago. She worked there with J. D. McFaden until he left in 1898, at which time she carried on alone for six months until J. O. Talley arrived on the field. She was active in children's work, food and clothing distribution, and pulpit ministry.<sup>36</sup> In 1915 she married J. W. Evalson of St. Joseph, Missouri, while working in that city, and she continued there as pastor. She is one of several ordained women whose work has combined home missionary and pastoral functions.<sup>37</sup>

(8) MARY MELISSA WAGONER BAUMAN (1876-1909), a native of Kansas, became a member of the Methodist Church at the age of thirteen. She entered high school at Lawrence, Kansas, in 1892, and taught for several years following her graduation in 1896. She married Louis S. Bauman (1875-1950) in 1898 and was baptized into membership in the Brethren Church. Her ordination came at Roann, Indiana, in December 1899.<sup>38</sup> Holsinger described her as "a talented, forcible, and consecrated woman," adding, "In his absence she is ever ready to take the place of her husband in the pulpit, and his people are delighted to have her do so."<sup>39</sup> She is usually credited with organizing the first Sisterhood of Mary and Martha<sup>40</sup> and wrote occasionally for *The Brethren Evangelist*.<sup>41</sup> Her ministry was shortlived, however, for she died suddenly of typhoid fever at the age of thirty-three on September 12, 1909.<sup>42</sup>

(9) Little is known of the work of CATHERINE PARKER (1838-1913) except that she began to preach for the Aurelia, Iowa, church in 1899 and died at the age of seventy-four in January 1913.<sup>43</sup>

(10) Nor is much presently known of LOVINA ELLEN YOUNG MEYERS (b. 1862). H. R. Holsinger included her in his turn-of-the-century gallery of "women preachers,"<sup>44</sup> describing her as a native of Pennsylvania. She joined the German Baptist Church at age sixteen and married M. C. Meyers at eighteen. She became a charter member of the Jones Mills Brethren Church and was national sec-



retary of the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor for several years. In 1896 she organized the Pennsylvania S.S.C.E., served most of the period 1896-1900 as state president, and in 1899 became field secretary for the district organization. She was an earnest advocate of the temperance cause, a movement endorsed in nearly every Brethren conference of the early years.<sup>45</sup>

(11) ANTONIA WALKER was pastor at Beaconsfield, Iowa, near Leon, for at least fifteen years (1902-17).<sup>46</sup> It is assumed that she was ordained for, in the years when a special mark signaled unordained ministers in *The Brethren Annual*, Antonia Walker was not so designated.

(12) VIANNA DETWILER (d. 1921) was born near Columbiana, Ohio, of German Baptist parents who joined the Brethren Church when it began. Her family moved when she was fourteen to Ridgely, Maryland, on the east side of Chesapeake Bay near Easton. There she finished public school and taught for two years, then attended the state Normal School, graduating in 1896. Following this she went to Washington, D.C., to assist in the Brethren mission there, having been baptized in 1895 by I. D. Bowman. It was also he who ordained her at Philadelphia in 1901<sup>47</sup> while she was president of the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor (1898-1905). She traveled for the S.S.C.E. during her first year as president, then entered Ashland College in 1899 and the University of Chicago in 1903. While in Chicago she worked in the Brethren mission where Sadie Gibbons had labored a few years earlier.

Upon completion of her university examinations Miss Detwiler left for the Brethren mission in Montreal, Quebec, where she served until about 1908 "faithfully but with little results."<sup>48</sup> She returned to Montreal about 1912 for brief service, then worked at other Brethren missions in Pittsburgh (1913), Philadelphia (1914-15), and Spokane (1915-16). The Spokane, Washington, work began about 1915, and for a year she and a handful of helpers did house-to-house visitation, conducted cottage prayer meetings, and led Bible study classes. After this a tent meeting led by L. S. Bauman resulted in more than fifty converts.<sup>49</sup> In addition to her frequent travel and constant ministry, Vianna Detwiler wrote often for *The Brethren Evangelist*, sometimes reporting her activities,<sup>50</sup> at other times offering devotional thoughts<sup>51</sup> or challenging women to become more active in the work of the church and its ministry.<sup>52</sup> The denomination was stunned by news of her sudden death on October 29, 1921, following a very brief illness.<sup>53</sup>

(13) ALICE M. HARLEY (1878-1905), like Mary Bauman, had only a brief life to give in her service for Christ. An 1896 graduate of Allentown, Pennsylvania, High School, she was baptized by I. D. Bowman in the same year. The congregation at Allentown named

her its first church school superintendent in 1898, and she built it in five years into the second largest school of the denomination.<sup>54</sup> She was ordained a deaconess in 1899 and was chosen to be assistant pastor in 1901. Although she made several mission tours in Pennsylvania on behalf of the S.S.C.E., she declined the offer of the presidency in 1903. Her heart was set on the foreign mission field, and I. D. Bowman ordained her to the ministry in May 1903.<sup>55</sup> Later that year the General Conference endorsed her for the soon-to-open work in Persia. But that field never materialized, and Miss Harley continued to work in Allentown through 1904 and into 1905, when she died unexpectedly of a lung ailment on March 3. She was twenty-six years old.<sup>56</sup> She wrote occasionally on devotional or missionary topics,<sup>57</sup> assisted in the care of a large family at home, guided the Allentown church school in its outstanding growth, and preached almost weekly.<sup>58</sup>

(14) It has been suggested that ADA GARBER DRUSHAL (1881-1975) was ordained to the ministry shortly before she and her husband George E. Drushal (d. 1958) went to Lost Creek, Kentucky, in October 1905 to begin the Brethren mission there.<sup>59</sup> She was reported together with him as a missionary-evangelist in *The Brethren Annual* for 1906-08, after which his name alone appears in the ministerial lists. She spent most of her adult life at Lost Creek, working as treasurer, bookkeeper, Bible teacher, midwife, undertaker, herb-healer, and correspondent. She was an active church school teacher until the age of ninety-two and died at ninety-four on December 28, 1975.<sup>60</sup>

This may be an appropriate place to introduce the names of four women of whom virtually nothing is known at present. (15-16) MARGARET AND MARY HOOVER were sisters remembered in later years by Brethren antiquarian Freeman H. Ankrum. He recalled that the sisters were from the Helser or Zionsville church districts of Perry County, Ohio. "They frequently preached in the Berachah church east of Glenford and the Bethel church west of Glenford."<sup>61</sup> (17) MRS. J. B. RICHARD was listed in *The Brethren Annual* for 1906 as the pastor at Allentown, Pennsylvania. (18) MRS. T. E. RICHARDS was similarly reported in the *Annual* for 1907 through 1910 as pastor with her husband at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Since neither of these last two was designated as unordained in lists where that distinction was made, the assumption is that both were ordained ministers.

*The Brethren Annual* for 1908 introduced the names of two other women whose lives proved to be interconnected in ways they did not expect. (19) BERTHA MAY BELL was mentioned in the 1908 ministerial list, but as unordained. The following year she became, with Dr. and Mrs. C. F. Yoder, one of the three original Brethren

missionaries to Argentina. (20) ETTA WARVEL BOWMAN was originally scheduled to be the Yoders' companion, with Miss Bell as a fourth party if possible. The lingering terminal illness of Mrs. Bowman's father caused her to remain in the United States while Miss Bell sailed with the Yoders from New York to Buenos Aires by way of Southampton, England, in the summer of 1909. Etta Bowman was national president of the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor in 1906-11, missionary-evangelist at Sidney, Indiana, in 1908, pastor at Akron, Indiana, in 1909, and appears in the ministerial lists for more than twenty years after that (North Manchester, Indiana, 1908-27; Spokane, Washington, 1928-31).<sup>62</sup> Bertha Bell, after a couple years of work in Argentina, returned to the States, and Dr. Yoder later wrote of her, "She was an able worker but was hindered by the customs which made it improper for a young woman to go about alone."<sup>63</sup>

(21) *The Brethren Annual* for 1909 listed MARGARET A. COOKE as pastor of the Cherry Hill church at Indiana, Pennsylvania. In the following year she was reported as pastor of the Brush Valley congregation, Dial, Pennsylvania. During the next few years Mrs. Cooke is recorded as serving either or both congregations until, after 1914, her name appears only in the general ministerial list for Pennsylvania through 1920. (22) MRS. P. J. JENNINGS also made her first appearance in *The Brethren Annual* for 1909: she was pastor at Allegheny and Oriskany, Virginia, while her husband was pastor at the Bethlehem church, Harrisonburg, Virginia. Her name next appears in the 1915 *Annual* as pastor at Buena Vista, Virginia, where she remained until 1923, when she was reported at Lynchburg, Virginia. In 1917 she submitted to *The Brethren Evangelist* a report of the expanding work at Buena Vista which had prospects of requiring enlargement of their church school facilities.<sup>64</sup>

(23) With MAUDE CRIPE WEBB (1886-1976), the Argentine mission field re-enters the picture. Having been called by the Missionary Board, ratified by the General Conference, and "set aside for the work by the laying on of hands,"<sup>65</sup> she sailed to Argentina in February-March 1911. Prior to that, her name had appeared in *The Brethren Annual* ministerial lists for 1909 (Goshen, Indiana) and 1910 (Reliance, Virginia); she was designated as unordained in both years. Having arrived in Rio Cuarto, Argentina, she entered the work, encountering the same barriers that Bertha Bell had experienced shortly before. In the course of her service there Miss Cripe met and married Leonard Webb, an Englishman who joined her in the work. The pair were greatly loved by all who knew them, but he became seriously ill, causing them to move in 1917 to Indiana, where he died and she remained to care for their two chil-



dren. Except for a brief period at Fort Scott, Kansas (1918), Mrs. Webb lived at Goshen or Shipshewana Lake, Indiana, until her death on January 6, 1976, at the age of eighty-nine.<sup>66</sup> She was accepted into membership in the National Brethren Ministerial Association in 1939.<sup>67</sup>

(24) During the period 1914-20 GRACE PRUDENCE FETTERS, wife of Pastor Enoch Feters, was enrolled in the ministerial list of *The Brethren Annual*, first at Columbus, Ohio (1914-17), then at New Troy, Michigan (1918-19), and Lapaz, Indiana (1920).

(25) DR. FLORENCE NEWBERRY GRIBBLE (1880-1942) was a figure well known in Brethren missionary annals a generation ago. In 1908 Miss Florence Newberry, a physician, sailed for missionary service in French Equatorial Africa on the same ship with James S. Gribble, a member of the Brethren Church traveling for the same purpose. Although James Gribble fell in love with Dr. Newberry at once, she wished to remain single in order to pursue her work with the Africa Inland Mission, which she did until several years later Mr. Gribble overcame her resistance. They were married during the summer of 1913 in Africa, then spent the years 1914-17 in the United States. The General Conference of 1914 approved Africa as a Brethren mission field, and the Gribbles worked through most of World War I to raise support for the venture. Prior to their return to Africa in January 1918, the 1917 Ohio district conference was informed that Dr. Gribble had been ordained to the ministry.<sup>68</sup> James Gribble lived only five more years on the African field, but Dr. Gribble was listed among the ministers in *The Brethren Annual* until the denomination divided in 1939. She continued to serve in medical missions until her death in Africa on March 31, 1942.<sup>69</sup>

(26) NORA PEARL BRACKEN DAVIS (1888-1935) was a native of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. After teaching school for seven years (1904-11), she enrolled at Ashland College, where she began the English Divinity course of study. Upon completion of two years she then worked another two years in the mission school at Lost Creek, Kentucky. Returning to Ashland, she completed the Divinity course in 1917 and served in 1917-18 as the pastor at Vandergrift Heights, Pennsylvania. She was ordained in October 1919 at the Vinco Brethren Church.<sup>70</sup> Further studies resulted in her receiving the B.A. degree from Ashland College (1921), after which she entered the Hartford (Connecticut) Seminary Foundation, specializing in religious education. She married Daniel R. Davis of Johnstown in August 1921, and the two attended North Manchester (Indiana) College for a brief time. During the years that followed they lived in Johnstown (1924-29), Schwenksville, Pennsylvania (1930-31), and Ridgely, Maryland (1932-35)—the latter ear-



lier known as the home of Vianna Detwiler. In the denomination at large Nora Bracken Davis was best known as the writer of teacher's materials for elementary and junior church school lessons. For this her advanced education, wide reading, and knowledge of the Greek New Testament served well. She died on July 23, 1935, at the age of forty-six.<sup>71</sup>

(27) Although some workers like Nora Davis traveled rather widely, MARY PENCE remained in one place throughout her more than twenty years of pastoral ministry. She was ordained in the summer of 1919 during a revival at Telford, Tennessee.<sup>72</sup> From 1920 through 1940 her name appears in *The Brethren Annual* ministerial list, always with the same address: Limestone, Tennessee, near Johnson City. She wrote occasionally for *The Brethren Evangelist*.<sup>73</sup>

(28) EMMA ABOUD (1880-1967) was born in Abey, Lebanon, and came to the United States at about the age of fourteen. After attending the Nyack Bible College she became affiliated with the Brethren Church and was accepted into the National Ministerial Association in 1920.<sup>74</sup> Her name first appears in the ministerial list of the 1923 *Brethren Annual* (Dayton, Ohio, to about 1927). She spent considerable time in evangelistic preaching in Brethren churches from coast to coast. She also served as pastor at Mulvane, Kansas, in 1940-41 and was church planter for the present congregation at Carleton, Nebraska. From 1942 to 1963 she lived in Los Angeles and Long Beach, California, after which she made her home in Philadelphia until her death on July 9, 1967.<sup>75</sup>

(29) Little is known at present of the ministry of GRACE P. SRACK. Having worked in the Kentucky mission, Mrs. Srack was called as pastor of the Pleasant Grove, Iowa, church at the beginning of 1922.<sup>76</sup> After that *The Brethren Annual* listed her as being at North English, Iowa (1923-25), and Lost Creek, Kentucky (1926-27). (30) Similarly, EDNA NICHOLAS (d. 1967) of Elkhart, Indiana, is not well known in the information currently available. *The Brethren Annual* includes her name in the ministerial lists from 1930 through 1967. She was accepted into the National Brethren Ministerial Association in 1939<sup>77</sup> and wrote occasionally for *The Brethren Evangelist*.<sup>78</sup> (31) The name of LAURA EVANGELINE LARSON is included in *The Brethren Annual* list of ministers for 1932 through 1935. She went to Argentina as a missionary in 1931 (the last one to go in the period 1909-39), where she worked in Rio Curato.<sup>79</sup>

(32) LORETTA CARRITHERS is another ordained Brethren woman who worked in a team ministry with her husband. Elmer Carrithers was a military chaplain during World War II, while his wife Loretta served as a licensed minister in Ohio and Iowa. She

was ordained at Peru, Indiana, in 1948<sup>80</sup> and then together with her husband pastored the Mansfield, Ohio, Brethren Church from about 1949 to 1953. She was accepted into the National Ministerial Association in 1949.<sup>81</sup>

(33) The last woman known to be ordained in the Brethren Church was ANNE BLACK, wife of Pastor E. J. Black. Her ordination took place at Muncie, Indiana, in 1957,<sup>82</sup> and her name was included in the ministerial lists of *The Brethren Annual* through 1959, when she and her husband left the denomination.

During the quarter-century since 1957, no women were ordained in the Brethren Church, but several have served as pastors: (34) MARY SPARKS was listed in *The Brethren Annual* as pastor of the Raystown, Pennsylvania, congregation in 1964-66, and (35) CORA JEAN BLACK was similarly reported for Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, in 1965-67. (36) The 1979 and 1980 *Brethren Directory* included Malaysian missionary JENNY LOI in the list of pastors and elders. At present, two women are licensed ministers in the Brethren Church: (37) JENNIFER JONES RAY is co-pastor of the Roann, Indiana, congregation in a team ministry with her husband James, and (38) SUSAN WHITE HYLAND, together with her husband Kenneth, has accepted a call to the pastorate of the Papago Park Church in Tempe, Arizona. The aspirations of Mrs. Ray and Mrs. Hyland are in keeping with a recommendation adopted by the 1974 General Conference: "2. Encourage women and men to engage in team ministry as ordained persons or as lay persons."<sup>83</sup>

This article has been only an introduction to the study of Brethren women in a century of ministry. Much more remains to be done. All names, places, and dates given herein are subject to correction on the basis of better evidence. Some persons have received scant attention in this discussion, not because their ministries were unimportant but because little information has been published about them. The writer invites pastors, students, and interested church members to join in recovering the story of Brethren women who have served in this way.

Questions of historical explanation and theological interpretation wait in the wings for answers: What arguments did the Brethren use a hundred years ago for and against women in ministry, and how do those arguments appear in light of current understanding? Why did the number of female ministers reach its peak around 1915 and then decline? Why have no women been ordained in the past quarter-century? What differences, if any, exist between ordination to missionary service and ordination for pastoral ministry?

The present study will be rewarded if others take up the intrigue

that remains. Most of all, the ideals of the Christian gospel will be served if some who read this will answer the challenge of the ministry for their own lives in the Brethren Church: Century Two.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>"Ministry" is a biblical concept as large as the church and its membership; "ministry" is "service." But for ease of understanding, "the ministry" is used in this article in the common sense of the church's "official" ministry, i.e., the ordained clergy or those serving as pastors, whether ordained or not.

As an introduction to the subject of Brethren women in ministry, this article is based almost entirely on previously published sources. They fall into several categories: For the early years, a primary source is the minutes of district and national conferences held by the (Progressive) Brethren Church, beginning in 1883, published annually in *The Brethren Annual*. An equally valuable source is [H. R.] *Holsinger's History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (see note 14, below), which contains considerable information in its biographical chapter (pp. 642-758).

For the entire period 1883-1983, the ministerial lists published almost every year in *The Brethren Annual* are valuable. Since they often describe the situation in the year prior to publication, a margin of error of at least one year must always be assumed. For easier reference, most citations in this article are to the publication date. A second source for the entire century is the denomination's periodical, *The Brethren Evangelist*, which for careful research purposes suffers two serious defects: no copies exist in any Brethren collection for the years 1889-94, and no complete index is yet available. The files of Albert T. Ronk (see notes 40, 48, below), preserved at Ashland Theological Seminary, approximate a subject index of the paper, as do those of Dale R. Stoffer (see note 59, below), who has graciously made his material available to the writer (especially notes 2-6).

<sup>2</sup>For example, S. H. Bashor, "Bashor's Reply to Calvert," *The Brethren Evangelist* (hereafter abbreviated *BE*) 7 (No. 20, May 20, 1885): 2-3, 6-7; E. S. Miller, "Seeing and Hearing," *BE* 7 (No. 24, June 17, 1885): 1.

<sup>3</sup>For example, Edward Mason, "The 'Covering,'" *BE* 8 (No. 46, Nov. 17, 1886): 3; A. L. Garber, "Editorial Items," *BE* 9 (No. 14, Apr. 6, 1887): 4; E. L. Yoder, "Paul's Instructions to Women," *BE* 9 (No. 21, May 25, 1887): 2-3; Edward Mason, "The 'Power' of the 'Covering,'" *BE* 10 (No. 35, Aug. 29, 1888): 2-3; A. D. Gnagey, "Notes and Comments," *BE* 18 (No. 26, June 24, 1896): 1; J. W. Beer, "The Kiss and the Covering," *BE* 20 (No. 29, July 27, 1898): 4-5; D. Bailey, "The Prayer Covering: Whence and Wherefore?" *BE* 20 (No. 36, Sep. 14, 1898): 4; A. D. Gnagey, "Information Bureau," *BE* 23 (No. 4, Jan. 24, 1901): 15; J. L. Gillin, "The Covering in the Corinthian Church," *BE* 23 (No. 21, May 23, 1901): 4-6.

<sup>4</sup>For example, C. F. Yoder, "The Deaconess Movement," *BE* 29 (No. 39, Oct. 9, 1907): 4; Mrs. J. Allen Miller, "Deaconesses," *BE* 30 (No. 34, Sep. 2, 1908): 6-7; Mrs. J. Allen Miller, "The Brethren Church and the Opportunity of Her Women," *BE* 37 (No. 34, Sep. 1, 1915): 6.



<sup>5</sup>For example, Lida Calvert Obenchain, "A Fool Notion," *BE* 25 (No. 39, Oct. 7, 1903): 12-13; [C. F. Yoder,] "Editorial Items," *BE* 26 (No. 41, Oct. 24, 1906): 1; [C. F. Yoder,] "Progress of a Good Cause," *BE* 27 (No. 41, Oct. 16, 1907): 12.

<sup>6</sup>For example, A. L. Garber, "Paul on Women Preaching," *BE* 8 (No. 27, July 7, 1886): 4; J. W. Beer, "Woman's Work in the Church," *BE* 10 (No. 28, July 11, 1888): 4; W. J. H. Bauman, "A Little Friendly Criticism," *BE* 10 (No. 28, July 11, 1888): 6; [A. L. Garber,] "Response to Bro. Harrison's Farewell," *BE* 16 (No. 39, Oct. 3, 1894): 11-12; A. D. Gnagey, "Women as Ministers," *BE* 17 (No. 8, Feb. 27, 1895): 11; A. D. Gnagey, "Women and the Apostle Paul," *BE* 21 (No. 34, Oct. 4, 1899): 1; J. L. Gillin, "Women in the Churches," *BE* 23 (No. 26, July 4, 1901): 3-4; L. S. Bauman, "Quaker City and Allentown Notes," *BE* 25 (No. 9, Mar. 4, 1903): 14-15; C. F. Yoder, "Gospel Church Government: V," *BE* 28 (No. 5, Jan. 31, 1906): 10; Mrs. L. S. Bauman, "Woman's New Place in the World under Christianity," *BE* 30 (No. 50, Dec. 30, 1908): 13-14; J. Allen Miller, "Answers to Queries," *BE* 32 (No. 19, May 11, 1910): 7; Vianna Detwiler, "Woman in the Church—Her Place and Work," *BE* 33 (No. 43, Nov. 8, 1911): 9; Mrs. Ellen Lichty [selected from *Central Pentecost*,] "Shall Women Preach?" *BE* 35 (No. 17, Apr. 23, 1913): 5.

<sup>7</sup>H. R. Holsinger, "Holsingerisms," *BE* 17 (No. 23, June 26, 1895): 3. Charles R. Munson kindly brought this statement to the attention of the writer.

<sup>8</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1891, p. 26. Although the title of this yearbook changed slightly through the century, for easier reference it will be cited in this article as *The Brethren Annual*. In recent years it has been at times separated into two parts, the Directory containing names and organization and the Annual containing minutes and reports. That division will be indicated and readily identifiable.

<sup>9</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1892, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>12</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1894, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1895, p. 10. In 1899 the editor of *The Brethren Evangelist* wrote, "Years ago, at one of the conferences of the Brethren church [sic] held in Pennsylvania, the following resolution was unanimously passed: 'Resolved that we encourage worthy young men and women in the Brethren church [sic] to enter the Christian ministry'" (A. D. Gnagey, "Women and the Apostle Paul," *BE* 21 (No. 34, Oct. 4, 1899): 1. Perhaps the Pennsylvania resolution referred to is one which the writer has not been able to find, or Gnagey may have mistakenly thought of the Indiana or Ohio resolutions quoted above.

<sup>14</sup>[H. R. Holsinger,] *Holsinger's History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Lathrop, CA: By the author, 1901), p. 735 (hereafter abbreviated *Holsinger, History*).

<sup>15</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1895, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup>For example, "Impressions of the Hour: Essay for Master's Degree, Monongahela College," *BE* 10 (No. 7, Feb. 15, 1888): 2; "The Silent



Teacher," *BE* 10 (No. 20, May 16, 1888): 2; "Elsewhere," *BE* 10 (No. 31, Aug. 1, 1888): 3; "Divine Growth," *BE* 23 (No. 3, Jan. 17, 1901): 8; "Mason-town, Pa.," *BE* 24 (No. 4, Jan. 22, 1902): 13.

<sup>17</sup>Holsinger, *History*, p. 735.

<sup>18</sup>F[loyd] Sibert, "A Pastor's Tribute," *BE* 55 (No. 32, Aug. 19, 1933): 14.

<sup>19</sup>Homer A. Kent, Sr., *Conquering Frontiers: A History of The Brethren Church (The National Fellowship of Brethren Churches)*, revised ed. (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1972), p. 121.

<sup>20</sup>Freeman H. Ankrum, "Laura Grossnickle Hedrick: Part One," *BE* 79 (No. 23, June 8, 1957): 5.

<sup>21</sup>Reprinted in *The Brethren Annual*, 1892, pp. 38-43.

<sup>22</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1892, p. 43.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>24</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1894, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1892, p. 113.

<sup>26</sup>For example, "Follow Me," *BE* 9 (No. 42, Oct. 19, 1887): 2; "Behold the Lamb of God," *BE* 9 (No. 45, Nov. 9, 1887): 2; "Christ's Compassion," *BE* 10 (No. 11, Mar. 14, 1888): 6; "Thoughts as Given to S.S.C.E.," *BE* 11 (No. 17, Apr. 24, 1889): 6; "What Think Ye of Christ?" *BE* 16 (No. 19, May 9, 1894): 4-7; "Heaven," *BE* 28 (No. 15, Aug. 11, 1906): 4; "The Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor," *BE* 31 (No. 25, June 30, 1909): 4-5.

<sup>27</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1896, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup>Freeman H. Ankrum, "Laura Grossnickle Hedrick," *BE* 79 (No. 23, June 8, 1957): 4-5, 7, and *BE* 79 (No. 28, July 13, 1957): 4-6.

<sup>29</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1894, p. 67.

<sup>30</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1895, p. 41; A. D. Gnagey, "Sister Dickey's Withdrawal," *BE* 16 (No. 48, Dec. 12, 1894): 8-9, containing a letter from Mrs. Dickey and comment by editor Gnagey.

<sup>31</sup>Holsinger, *History*, p. 670.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 672.

<sup>33</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1898, p. 13; 1899, p. 29.

<sup>34</sup>[C. F. Yoder,] "Work and Workers," *BE* 26 (No. 46, Nov. 30, 1904): 10.

<sup>35</sup>Holsinger, *History*, pp. 554-55.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 573-74; [C. F. Yoder,] "Missions and Missionaries," *BE* 26 (No. 1, Jan. 6, 1904): 4.

<sup>37</sup>See also her articles "Three Sisters," *BE* 16 (No. 13, Mar. 28, 1894): 5-6; "Shadows," *BE* 20 (No. 34, Aug. 31, 1898): 2; "Heaven," *BE* 28 (No. 15, Apr. 11, 1906): 4; "How Awaken a More Extensive Missionary Zeal among our Women," *BE* 36 (No. 8, Feb. 25, 1914): 6.

<sup>38</sup>Holsinger, *History*, p. 644.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Albert T. Ronk, *History of the Brethren Church: Its Life, Thought, Mission* (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 263-64.

<sup>41</sup>"Giving Enriches the Giver," *BE* 20 (No. 37, Sep. 21, 1898): 4; "Christian Growth," *BE* 22 (No. 12, Mar. 22, 1900): 9; "Woman's New Place in the World under Christianity," *BE* 30 (No. 50, Dec. 30, 1908): 13-14; "Loyalty to the Holy Spirit," *BE* 31 (No. 45, Dec. 1, 1909): 4-5.

<sup>42</sup>See the memorial by H. L. Goughnour, *BE* 31 (No. 36, Sep. 29, 1909): 16.

<sup>43</sup>Holsinger, *History*, p. 562; *The Brethren Annual*, 1914, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup>At present, Holsinger's inclusion of her photograph in the group he called "women preachers" (Holsinger, *History*, p. 699) is the only evidence for her official ministerial status among the Brethren.

<sup>45</sup>Holsinger, *History*, p. 701. See her article "Women and the Temperance Cause," *BE* 30 (No. 16, Apr. 22, 1908): 5.

<sup>46</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1903-18. References to this minister present the student of history with major problems, for she is listed as Antonia Walker/Wanker of Beaconsfield/Beaconsville, Illinois/Iowa! Her name is spelled Walker more frequently than Wanker. The writer has been unable to locate a Beaconsville in either Illinois or Iowa, but near Leon, Iowa, where the Brethren had a congregation for many years, there is the village of Beaconsfield; hence the identification given in the text.

<sup>47</sup>I. D. Bowman, "Philadelphia, Pa.," *BE* 23 (No. 45, Nov. 21, 1901): 11-12.

<sup>48</sup>Albert T. Ronk, *History of Brethren Missionary Movements* (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Company, 1971), p. 35.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>50</sup>For example, her report on the Ridgely congregation, *BE* 21 (No. 7, Feb. 15, 1900): 13; "Letter from the President," *BE* 25 (No. 24, June 24, 1903): 8.

<sup>51</sup>"St. John," *BE* 23 (No. 6, Feb. 7, 1901): 5-6; "How to Realize the Friendship of Jesus," *BE* 36 (No. 13, Apr. 1, 1914): 4-5; "Am I an Intercessor?" *BE* 43 (No. 17, Apr. 27, 1921): 5-6.

<sup>52</sup>"Woman and the Church," *BE* 30 (No. 16, Apr. 22, 1908): 3; "Woman in the Church—Her Place and Work," *BE* 33 (No. 43, Nov. 8, 1911): 9.

<sup>53</sup>See the reports and tribute in *BE* 43 (No. 46, Nov. 30, 1921): 15; *BE* 43 (No. 48, Dec. 14, 1921): 14.

<sup>54</sup>L. S. Bauman, "Alice M. Harley," *BE* 27 (No. 12, Mar. 22, 1905): 15.

<sup>55</sup>Isaac D. Bowman, "Philadelphia, Pa.," *BE* 23 (No. 45, Nov. 21, 1901): 11-12.

<sup>56</sup>[C. F. Yoder,] "Miss Alice Harley Called to Persia," *BE* 25 (No. 35, Sep. 9, 1903): 11; [C. F. Yoder,] "Work and Workers," *BE* 27 (No. 11, Mar. 15, 1905): 10; Q. R. Musselman, "Alice Harley," *BE* 27 (No. 11, Mar. 15, 1905): 15; "An Open Letter from I. D. Bowman to Brother Harley and Family,"

BE 27 (No. 11, Mar. 15, 1905): 15; L. S. Bauman, "Alice M. Harley," BE 27 (No. 12, Mar. 22, 1905): 14-15.

<sup>57</sup>"The Conditions of True Spiritual Growth," BE 21 (No. 41, Oct. 19, 1899): 9; "Qualifications of the Foreign Worker," BE 24 (No. 45, Nov. 12, 1902): 9-10.

<sup>58</sup>[C. F. Yoder,] "Miss Alice Harley Called to Persia," BE 25 (No. 35, Sep. 9, 1903): 11.

<sup>59</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Background and Development of Thought and Practice in the German Baptist Brethren (Dunker) and The Brethren (Progressive) Churches (c. 1650-1979)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1980), p. 536.

<sup>60</sup>Harold E. Barnett, "In Memory of Mrs. Ada Garber Drushal," BE 98 (No. 3, March 1976): 23.

<sup>61</sup>Freeman H. Ankrum, "Laura Grossnickle Hedrick: Part One," BE 79 (No. 23, June 8, 1957): 7.

<sup>62</sup>L. S. Bauman, "Field Secretary's Notes," BE 31 (No. 6, Feb. 10, 1909): 15; Ronk, *History of Brethren Missionary Movements*, pp. 62-66.

<sup>63</sup>Charles F. Yoder, *The Argentine Mission Field* (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Company, 1930), p. 124.

<sup>64</sup>[R. R. Teeter,] "Review of the Thought and Work of the Church," BE 39 (No. 5, Jan. 31, 1917): 8. Her report follows on pp. 12-13.

<sup>65</sup>Ronk, *History of Brethren Missionary Movements*, p. 65.

<sup>66</sup>See notice of her death, BE 98 (No. 3, March 1976): 24.

<sup>67</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1940, p. 21.

<sup>68</sup>[R. R. Teeter,] "News from the Field," BE 40 (No. 26, July 10, 1918): 10. The Ohio Ministerial Examining Board consisted of A. D. Gnagey, J. Allen Miller, and W. C. Teeter.

<sup>69</sup>Orville D. Jobson, *Conquering Oubangui-Chari for Christ* (Winona Lake, IN: Brethren Missionary Herald Company, 1957), p. 97.

<sup>70</sup>Mrs. Davis's granddaughter, Patricia Pyne, has generously made available her grandmother's ordination certificate as evidence of this.

<sup>71</sup>See Charles A. Bame, "Nora Bracken Davis: An Appreciation," BE 57 (No. 31, Aug. 10, 1935): 11-12, together with a tribute by her husband in the same place. Patricia Pyne (see preceding note) also furnished the writer with an undated newspaper obituary. The three accounts do not agree, and so the writer has attempted a conjectural reconstruction which will present as few contradictions as possible.

<sup>72</sup>G. C. Carpenter, "Kentucky Mission Notes," BE 41 (No. 26, July 2, 1919): 12.

<sup>73</sup>For example, "Jesus of Yesterday, Today and Forever," BE 42 (No. 7, Feb. 18, 1920): 8; "The Epitaph at Christ's Tomb," BE 42 (No. 13, Mar. 31, 1920): 7.

<sup>74</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1921, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup>Robert Keplinger, "Rev. Emma Aboud Passes Away," *BE* 89 (No. 17, Aug. 19, 1967): 25; *The Brethren Annual*, 1967-68, p. 33.

<sup>76</sup>[G. S. Baer,] "Editorial Review," *BE* 43 (No. 43, Nov. 9, 1921): 3. See also her article "An Opportunity, A Vision, A Duty," *BE* 43 (No. 43, Nov. 9, 1921): 7.

<sup>77</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1940, p. 21.

<sup>78</sup>For example, "The All-Sufficiency of God's Grace," *BE* 52 (No. 14, Apr. 5, 1930): 6; "The Sustaining Power of Faith," *BE* 78 (No. 34, Sep. 1, 1956): 11.

<sup>79</sup>Ronk, *History of Brethren Missionary Movements*, p. 66.

<sup>80</sup>[F. C. Vanator,] "Loretta Carrithers Ordained to Full Gospel Ministry," *BE* 71 (No. 4, Jan. 22, 1949): 8. The ordination service was conducted by J. Milton Bowman, Willis E. Ronk, and Claud Studebaker.

<sup>81</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1949-50, p. 19. See her article "A Little Child Shall Lead Them," *BE* 70 (No. 14, Apr. 3, 1948): 4. Beginning in *The Brethren Annual* for 1973, Loretta Carrithers was erroneously listed in such a manner as to make readers unaware of her status as an ordained minister. After 1976 her name did not appear at all, but the writer understands that she continues to be a member in good standing of the National Brethren Ministerial Association.

<sup>82</sup>[W. S. Benshoff,] "Mrs. Anne Black Ordained on Easter Sunday," *BE* 79 (No. 28, July 13, 1957): 13. The ordination service was conducted by Henry Bates, E. J. Black, and Arthur H. Tinkel, Sr.

<sup>83</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1974, p. 26. The action came as a recommendation from the moderator, Paul D. Steiner, and subsequently was endorsed by the Executive Committee and adopted by the General Conference. William Kerner kindly brought this item to the attention of the writer.



# PROGRESSIVISM—A DEFINITION

by Dale R. Stoffer

## *Introduction*

In any movement the original ideals on which it was based are gradually forgotten or watered down by the passage of time. Slogans and platforms which had a crisp, assertive ring become trite and stale. The centennial year of The Brethren Church provides an occasion to reexamine the convictions which caused six thousand men and women to leave or be expelled from the German Baptist Brethren Church (the present-day Church of the Brethren) and begin a new denomination. The purpose of this article is fourfold: (1) to give a historical overview of the events that led to the formation of The Brethren Church; (2) to look briefly at the areas of contention among the various factions in the German Baptist Brethren Church; (3) to distill the basic principles which gave the Progressive movement its distinctive character; and (4) to offer a definition and evaluation of Progressivism.

## *Historical Overview*

It is necessary to return to the early 1800s to provide a foundation for understanding the Progressive movement. Until the 1830s the Brethren<sup>1</sup> had generally been insulated from the influences of American society. Three factors in particular made this insulation possible: the retention of their German language and subculture during the early decades of the 1800s; the tendency of the agriculturally minded Brethren to migrate westward, frequently in groups, in search of better and cheaper land; the strong religious principles of simplicity and separation from the world. By the 1840s, however, English had become the predominant language among the Brethren and their enclaves were increasingly being surrounded by American culture. The Brethren were forced to come to terms with the fast-changing, materialistic society of the new world.

Initially the Brethren sought to "fence out" the influences of American culture through the decisions of Annual Meeting.<sup>2</sup> Rulings were rendered on everything from life insurance to flowered wallpaper. During the 1850s, however, men like Henry Kurtz, James Quinter, and John Kline began advocating the use of modern practices—periodical literature, Sunday Schools, higher education, evangelism—to aid the church in its mission.

During the 1860s and '70s three distinct positions gradually

evolved in response to the acculturation process. The left wing, known as the Progressives, sought to "keep pace with the times." Led by Henry Ritz Holsinger, it advocated the use of any practice that would contribute to the mission of the church.

The right wing, known as the Old German Baptist Brethren or "Old Order," saw these "innovations" as entirely worldly and a departure from biblical Christianity. Guided by Peter Nead and his son-in-law, Samuel Kinsey, the Old Orders desired to "maintain the ancient order of the Brethren."

The largest group, the conservatives (the present Church of the Brethren), sought a middle ground. They were willing to see change, but it had to be gradual. For such men as R. H. Miller, James Quinter, and J. H. Moore, the unity of the main part of the church was more important than either progression or the old order.

The dissension created in the church by these three positions led to the emergence of two new denominations between 1881 and 1883. The Old German Baptist Brethren withdrew from the main body of the church in 1881 while the Progressive leaders who founded The Brethren Church in 1883 in Dayton, Ohio were for the most part expelled from the church.

### *Issues Contributing to the Division*

There were seven main issues that formed the battleground among these three groups.<sup>3</sup> Consideration of these issues will help to clarify the distinctive position of each group. Periodical literature was the first source of friction. In 1851 Henry Kurtz, a leading elder in the church who probably would have considered himself a Conservative (he died before the divisions), felt the time was ripe for a monthly publication to serve the interests of the denomination. He therefore began the *Gospel Visitor* in April as a means of fostering unity in the widely scattered Brotherhood and of resolving doctrinal and practical problems.<sup>4</sup> In addition he hoped that the *Visitor* would have apologetic value by promoting ideals and principles distinctive to the Brethren.

In 1865 Henry Holsinger, a former apprentice of Kurtz,<sup>5</sup> began the second paper aimed at a Brethren clientele, the *Christian Family Companion*. This paper presented a marked contrast to the moderately progressive *Visitor*. Holsinger was more forceful in advocating progressive practices and designed his periodical as an "open forum" in which writers could express their opinions freely on a whole range of controversial topics with little editorial comment. In 1873 increasing opposition from Annual Meeting caused Holsinger to sell the paper to James Quinter who had succeeded

Kurtz as editor of the *Visitor*. Holsinger continued to feel, however, that the Progressive movement needed a stronger voice so in 1878 he reentered the publishing field with a weekly, *The Progressive Christian*. From this point on Holsinger became the catalyst for the Progressive wing of the church while *The Progressive Christian* became its mouthpiece.

The Old Order Brethren felt compelled, amidst this chorus of progressive voices, to publish their own journal, *The Vindicator*, in 1870. These periodicals played a central role in the controversies by keeping attention focused on the major issues and by popularizing the disputes related to these issues.

The second area of controversy related to education. Traditionally the Brethren had felt that a "common school" education supplied all necessary skills. All higher education—high school and college—was deemed a worldly endeavor which tended to lead youth astray and inculcate a spirit of pride. This was the Old Order position.<sup>6</sup> Beginning in 1856, however, James Quinter, through the *Visitor*, led the movement for acceptance of Brethren related high schools and colleges. He argued among other things that such training would meet the necessary requirements for serving as school teachers, thereby ensuring that Brethren teachers could bring moral and religious values into public education; Brethren schools would provide a Christian influence lacking in most institutions for those youth set on obtaining advanced education; the church could better preserve her youth if such schools were available. Though the 1858 Annual Meeting accepted the concept of Brethren-related schools provided they were "an individual enterprise" founded on "gospel principles," a long string of failures occurred before the first schools were established which would stand the test of time: Juniata College (1876), Ashland College (1878), and Mount Morris Seminary and Collegiate Institute (1879; in 1932 it merged with Manchester College).

A third battleground involved evangelism. After the cooling of the evangelistic zeal of the early Brethren, very little effort was made to evangelize non-Christian neighbors. The Brethren instead relied on a "passive evangelism" which was content to wait for people to apply to the church for membership. In the 1860s, however, men like John Kline, D. P. Saylor, James Quinter, and H. R. Holsinger began to call for the establishment of a definite plan of evangelism. It was not until 1880, however, with the establishment of a Domestic and Foreign Mission Board that any organized approach to home mission work became a reality. Nevertheless, during the 1870s the Progressives, led by Stephen H. Bashor, were very active in evangelism, especially of the revivalistic type. The Old Order Brethren focused their criticism on the revivalistic



methods of the Progressives. These included utilizing protracted meetings (a series of meetings with preaching designed to lead to conversion and baptism), signing revival hymns, presenting invitations to rise or come forward, and inducing emotional decisions without stressing the need to "count the cost."

A fourth area of conflict related to the above concern. As interest in evangelism increased in the 1860s and '70s pressure for a paid (or subsidized) ministry also grew. Progressives and some Conservatives felt that the families of traveling evangelists should be cared for. The Old Order Brethren were firmly committed to the traditional free ministry and feared a paid minister would be more likely to preach what his congregation wanted to hear.

The fifth point of controversy was Sunday Schools. Jame Quinter through the *Visitor* in 1858 and 1859 advocated that Sunday Schools be established as a means of supplementing parental instruction and teaching by the ministry. The Old Orders viewed Sunday Schools as a popular innovation which would reduce the control that parents had over the Christian education of their children. A further area of contention was Sunday School conventions. Appearing among the Brethren by 1876, these district-wide gatherings involved lectures and workshops relating to various aspects of the Sunday School. The Progressives heartily supported these gatherings but the Conservatives joined the Old Orders in opposing them.

Dress was the sixth issue in the controversy. The Old Order Brethren felt that in submitting to the traditional plain dress of the Brethren<sup>7</sup> one demonstrated a spirit yielded to the traditional Brethren principles of humility, nonconformity, simplicity, and modesty. They desired uniformity in dress and urged that Annual Meeting take an active role in maintaining the old order of dress. The Progressives, however, felt that individual conscience should determine how one should apply the principle of non-conformity. They held that mandatory uniformity destroys that vital spirit of inner obedience which is at the heart of the Christian life. The Conservatives sought to find a middle ground. On one hand, they were averse to the itemization and detailing of the order of dress but, on the other, they wanted to guard against the notion that harmony and unity even in outward things is immaterial. They sought to balance respect for the traditions of the elders with openness, in the contemporary setting, to the guidance of the Spirit of truth.

The final area of conflict and one which caused great dissension was the question of the mode of footwashing.<sup>8</sup> The Old Order Brethren practiced a form in which one person would wash consecutively the feet of several people while another followed and



wiped their feet (the double mode). Since the vast majority of churches around 1860 utilized this mode, the Old Order Brethren fought hard for uniformity in practice. The Progressives, however, sought the freedom to practice a form in which one person both washes and wipes the feet of another (the single mode). Holding this to be the earliest form of footwashing, they desired forbearance on the issue. Eventually both the Progressives and Conservatives adopted this latter mode of footwashing.

Though the issues catalogued above were the most visible sources of conflict among the Old Orders, Conservatives, and Progressives, there was another set of differences which was, in reality, the underlying cause of tension. It is to these foundational differences that we must now look.

### *The Platforms of the Parties*

A definition of Progressivism becomes possible only when the platforms of both the Old Order Brethren and Conservatives are also understood. F. Ernest Stoeffler has rightly observed that "... the ethos of a group can best be presented [and discerned] if the latter fights vigorously against some real or imagined enemy . . . ."<sup>9</sup> The polemical writings which come from the period between 1865 and 1883 provide ample material to distill at least three fundamental issues out of which the other more visible differences arose. These issues consisted of the questions of polity, the authorities used for determining faith and practice, and the attitude toward adaptation to the world.

As was noted earlier the Brethren sought initially to come to terms with the surrounding American culture by turning to Annual Meeting for rulings on a wide variety of issues. The number of issues coming before Annual Meeting forced the church to seek more efficient and effective means of organization. Between 1847 and 1868 a number of changes were made in Annual Meeting which gave it far more authority in determining the course of the church.<sup>10</sup> One of these changes is especially noteworthy. Very early in the history of Annual Meeting the practice arose for the host church to select five or more respected elders who would present answers to the questions brought to the gathering. This group gradually evolved into the Standing Committee of Annual Meeting. By 1868 it had taken final form. Only elders could serve on the committee which was composed of men elected from the various districts. This committee had considerable power for not only did it decide what business came before Annual Meeting but it also framed the responses to the questions brought to the gathering (the responses did have to be accepted by the

delegates, however). Because there was very little change in this committee from year to year, a small group of Conservative elders held considerable power over the direction of the denomination.

Both the Old Orders and the Progressives were disenchanted by this growing institutionalization in the church. In a petition submitted to Annual Meeting in 1869, the Old Order Brethren cried for greater simplicity in the organization of Annual Meeting. They singled out for criticism the selection of a certain portion of the Standing Committee from each state (as opposed to selecting the committee from all the elders present), the appointment of a "human moderator" (rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to be the guide or moderator for the committee's discussions), and the practice of listing all the members of the Standing Committee in the minutes. The Old Orders felt that, besides creating a barrier to the movement of the Holy Spirit, these practices tended both to "elevate and exalt the mind" and to concentrate "too much [power] in the hands of a few." Also criticized was the power recently assumed by Annual Meeting of sending committees to various churches where difficulties were present. The Old Orders preferred the older practice of settling such difficulties—the local church should call in elders from the adjoining districts to help resolve the problem. Only when a local issue remained unsettled or in cases where the ordinances or doctrines of the church were involved should the ruling of Annual Meeting be sought.<sup>11</sup> Annual Meeting decisions on the ordinances and doctrine should be uniformly observed in all local churches. After the Old Orders reorganized following their withdrawal from the Conservatives, they also repudiated district organizations and meetings.<sup>12</sup>

The Progressives, like the Old Orders, objected to the prerogative assumed by Annual Meeting of sending committees to local congregations. The Progressives, the most congregational of any of the groups, felt such a practice was a violation of the rights of the individual congregation. Though they maintained that in matters of doctrine "the church of Christ should universally harmonize," they upheld the right of local congregations to decide questions of "government and custom."<sup>13</sup> All decisions of Annual Meeting for which there was no Gospel precept should be considered advisory only. The Progressives maintained that they were following the traditional Brethren understanding of these decisions and cited for additional support the testimony of such a departed statesman as John Kline.<sup>14</sup> The importance of District and Annual Conferences was recognized but it was felt that they should be held primarily "for social advantages, and for consultation upon general methods of church work, and to beget a unity and concert of action in all im-

portant matters.”<sup>15</sup> The Progressives were also critical of the increasing authority of the Standing Committee because it “made bishops separate and superior to the body and authority of the church, whereas the gospel declares them servants of the church.”<sup>16</sup>

Though there was some disagreement among the Conservatives concerning what authority the decisions of Annual Meeting should have, the view that these decisions should be mandatory had gained the ascendancy by 1882. This year it was decided that all queries should be decided according to Scripture

where there is anything direct . . . applying to the questions. And all questions to which there is no direct expressed Scripture applying, it shall be decided according to the spirit and meaning of the Scripture. And that decision shall be mandatory to all churches having such cases as the decision covers. And all who shall not so heed and observe it shall be held as not hearing the church, and shall be dealt with accordingly.<sup>17</sup>

Such was the protest against this minute that it was modified the next year by the statement that this “decision shall not be so construed as to prevent the Annual Meeting from giving advice when it deems it proper to do so, and that given advice, shall be so entered upon the minutes.”<sup>18</sup> These developments clearly indicate that the Conservatives felt that the unity in faith and practice of the total community must have precedence over the liberty of the individual member or church. R. H. Miller gives expression to this concept.

Uniformity is but one of many peculiarities that separates God’s people from the world. One by one they may all be taken out of the way and every form that manifests the Christian spirit of humility and strict obedience, be supplanted by forms that manifest the flesh. This is one thing that congregationalism has never failed to do. . . . When a single congregation assumes the right to decide,—it assumes the right to change, and it changes to suit itself without regard to the judgment of the Brotherhood, or the feelings of adjoining congregations . . . .<sup>19</sup>

The second fundamental difference among the three factions concerned the question of what authorities should be used for determining Brethren faith and practice. The position of the Old Order Brethren on this question is succinctly stated by the standard which Samuel Kinsey adopted for the *Vindicator* and which appeared on the title page of every issue: they sought obedience to “the ancient order, and self-denying principles of the church, as taught by the Savior and held forth by the early fathers of our Fraternity.” The Old Order Brethren followed Peter Nead in holding that



Where the testament is silent on the order or mode of observance [of the ordinances], the brethren, by whom God organized the church, were clothed with authority to say in what way the commandments or institutions of his house are to be practiced.<sup>20</sup>

Between the gospel and the ancient order of the Brethren, the Old Orders had a tightly knit and unified framework which they felt constrained to preserve in the face of a worldly culture and corrupted Christianity. They therefore felt that Annual Meeting should serve primarily as a conservator of the established order. Along these lines Samuel Kinsey writes:

It never was the object of the Annual Meeting—neither has she a right—to sanction new rules and orders, and to instill new principles, but rather to see that the established rules and old principles be *preserved*; that all preach the same and practice the same; and, that thus offenses, a variety of practices and divisions, be warded off, and the sweet harmony, peace, love and *purity* of the church be maintained.<sup>21</sup>

The Progressives were in agreement that Gospel explicit must be observed but differed with both Old Orders and Conservatives about practices on which Scripture is silent. Holsinger addresses this issue.

We are in perfect accord with the practice of the church in its administration of the ordinances of the Gospel. So far as we have plain instructions in God's word as to how we should proceed, we believe it is well that we should have uniformity; but when the Scriptures are not definite, no such regularity is required. The Scriptures must be the basis of our uniformity. Our methods of bringing about a uniformity differs from some of our brethren in this wise: They have adopted an order or custom which obtained by accident or otherwise among their predecessors, we by teaching the gospel, inculcating scriptural sentiments upon all points, and the aggregation of effects thus brought about is our uniformity.<sup>22</sup>

The Progressives charged that, by stressing the "order of the Brethren," the Conservatives and the Old Orders especially were majoring on "externals" and neglecting "the weightier matters of the law of God." The Progressives held that the ancient customs of the church should be respected,<sup>23</sup> and they even maintained at the time of the split that they were "the only true conservators and perpetuators of the brotherhood and its original doctrines and principles."<sup>24</sup> Yet they felt that no tradition, including their own, could be elevated to a position in which it could not be scrutinized by the touchstone of the gospel.

The Conservatives sought a middle way between these two positions. Though emphasizing that the Bible must be the only rule of faith and practice, the Conservatives placed a great deal of respect



in the "councils of the ancient Brethren." Note how J. H. Moore deals with the issue.

There are two extremes in . . . [this] matter, each one equally dangerous. The one consists in ignoring and positively rejecting everything done, and recognized by those of former years, and the other is to claim that those who lived just before our time were, in some way, so influenced by the Holy Spirit, that what they did was right, and, therefore, we dare not set aside or alter their decisions on any point.

The actions of our ancient Brethren were not inspired in any divine sense, but were simply the result of their best judgment and careful reading, and should be respected by us only as they harmonize with the "thus saith the Lord" and the general tenor of the Gospel.<sup>25</sup>

The Conservatives thus combined belief in the priority of Scripture with a high regard for, yet a willingness to change, the received order.<sup>26</sup>

A third basic point of contention was their respective attitudes toward the acceptance of new practices. A number of factors actually come into play on this point—both of the preceding differences (polity and sources of authority) and also the factor of acculturation, that is, whether and how fast the church should become a part of the outside religious and cultural world. The Old Orders showed rigid opposition to any kind of acculturation (though they have softened somewhat on this point), rejecting higher education, Sunday schools, revival meetings, etc. as "innovations" and seeking to conserve the order of the church as they knew it. The Progressives were the most open to the outside secular and religious world, earning themselves the label, "the fast element." They accepted new practices if they were not contrary to the gospel and contributed to the mission of the church. Holsinger clearly expresses the Progressive position:

. . . The Progressive Christian will advocate an onward movement by the use of all lawful and expedient means. We hold it our duty to keep pace with the times. And we mean what we say, an onward movement, and not a backward movement. . . .

By keeping pace with the times, we have more direct reference to the using of such improvements as the advancements of science and art may introduce, for the promulgation of the religion of Christ. . . .

. . . And we would keep up, fully up, and not a year or twenty-five years behind the times, as the Brethren have been all along in most things, such as newspapers, colleges, Sunday Schools, and the like.

And again; we believe in keeping pace with the times in matters outside of religion.<sup>27</sup>

Practically, this was the essence of progressivism to the Progress-

sives. Yet the term "progressive" also had a spiritual meaning which was accepted by both Progressives and Conservatives. To be progressive in a spiritual sense meant advancement, development, or progression in Christian maturity and truth. The Conservatives, however, were much more careful to distinguish between a Christian and non-Christian form of progression.

A "Progressive Christian" is one who is approaching still nearer to the Bible—one who is moving toward the Bible and away from the world. . . . Progression is all right . . . if it makes people more humble, more honest, more consistent and more obedient to every part of God's Word . . . ; but if it makes them high-minded, self-willed, proud, boastful, and disobedient to the Bible and the church, it follows that there may be considerable progression, but very little Christianity.<sup>28</sup>

The Conservatives tried to steer a middle course between the Old Orders and Progressives on this issue of *adiaphora* as they did on others. They were willing to see change but it could not be at the expense of the unity of the main body of the church. Though the Conservatives sought to maintain a balance between both positions in the 1870s, the rigid position of the Old Orders and the constant agitation of the Progressives created a reluctant willingness among the Conservatives by the early 1880s to see both factions removed for the sake of harmony in the church.

### ***A Definition and Evaluation of Progressivism***

As can be seen by the above, progressivism had a variety of facets which combined to give it its distinctive character. One facet was sociological. As the gap between the established order of the Brethren and American culture widened, pressure from those who wanted to take advantage of what the modern world could offer the church grew proportionately. Progressives therefore utilized constant agitation through the periodicals, in the local churches, and at Annual Meeting to gain support for their agenda of reforms. In addition, the Progressives desired to be able to speak to the contemporary world. They were not content with the passive evangelism of the Old Orders. They were convinced that evangelism would be far more effective if the Brethren were on an equal footing with the modern man and woman. This is why education became such an important part of the Progressive platform.<sup>29</sup>

A second facet was theological. The Progressives recognized that the Christian faith was dependent on the joint ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. They saw the ministry of both being encumbered by the increasing formalism represented by the decisions of Annual Meeting. The Progressives maintained that it is the Spirit who gives life and vitality to the outward practices and

forms of the church. Legalizing the "order of the Brethren" through the decisions of Annual Meeting effectively limited the Spirit's work to a single form which lacked divine authorization.<sup>30</sup> Only those doctrines and forms having Scriptural authority should be made mandatory; all other forms are advisory and to make them a test of fellowship is an addition to the Gospel. The two slogans which punctuated Progressive writings bear out their position: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible" and "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Thirdly the Progressives viewed their work as a return to the ideals of the early Brethren. They frequently stated that they were the true conservators of the Brethren heritage. In this sense then the Progressives were a reform movement.

These elements of progressivism can be distilled into the following definition. Progressivism was a reform movement in the German Baptist Brethren Church in the latter half of the 1800s which sought to be culturally up to date in utilizing any cultural practice which would aid the church in its mission and in adapting to modern customs insofar as they might enable the church to more effectively share the Gospel in the contemporary setting. It rejected the concept of mandatory uniformity in external matters not specifically addressed in Scripture, seeing such a practice as a human addition to the Gospel and a limitation to the work of the Holy Spirit. It sought to balance fidelity to the unchanging creed of Scripture with the need to declare and model that creed through the Spirit's leading within the context of an ever-changing world.

As with any reform movement there is the danger of overreacting to the opposite extreme. In the hundred years since the founding of The Brethren Church it is possible to discern several areas in which the Progressives reacted to an extreme. In both their theology of conversion and their polity the Progressives accentuated the individual at the expense of the community. With the acceptance of revivalism, the Progressives were influenced by a movement which tended to subserve the interests of the corporate community to those of the individual. Corporate worship was organized in such a way as to lead the sinner to Christ or revive the faith of the believer. As a result, the corporate commitment found in the early Brethren synthesis of Anabaptism and Pietism (which pointed the individual to the community) was severely weakened.<sup>31</sup>

In their polity the Progressives showed an excessive individuality in emphasizing the *advisory* nature of all decisions at the district and national levels as opposed to taking responsibility freely for these decisions made by the representatives of local churches. The bias against the larger, denominational identity of the church is evidenced in the facts that between 1883 and 1892 only three



General Conferences were held and that during the same period Ashland College and the Brethren Publishing Company nearly died because of lack of financial support at the local level. In addition numerous young churches disbanded because no organized program of ministerial supply was put into effect by The Brethren Church.

The other area in which the Progressives overreacted was in their extreme openness to new cultural and religious movements. During the late 1800s and early 1900s both fundamentalism and liberalism entered the church. During the 1910s the church faced sharp controversy which was resolved only after those influenced by liberalism left the church in the 1920s. But in the 1930s a clash between a fundamentalist group (the Grace Brethren) and a group committed to more traditional Brethren views (the Ashland Brethren) rent the denomination in half. Had The Brethren Church been more discerning about its own identity and calling these controversies may never have occurred.

As The Brethren Church celebrates its centennial it has a rich heritage of which it can be proud. But it needs to remember that its future depends on its fidelity to God's Word and its sensitivity to the Spirit's leading. Only as it is self-conscious about its identity and purpose can the church progress in the next century with confidence of its calling.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Brethren movement began in Germany in 1708 but by 1729 nearly the entire fellowship had emigrated to America, settling initially in eastern Pennsylvania. By 1800 Brethren had moved south as far as South Carolina, had crossed the Cumberland Gap into Tennessee and Kentucky, and had just moved into Ohio and Missouri. Being primarily an agrarian people, the Brethren were quick to settle newly opened frontiers in the Midwest, Central states, and Far West. By 1850 Brethren were to be found from the Atlantic to the Pacific though the greatest concentration of members has remained in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana.

<sup>2</sup>Annual Meeting began in the latter 1700s as an occasion for the growing brotherhood to fellowship together and present questions of doctrine and practice for consideration by the gathered body.

<sup>3</sup>For fuller details concerning each of these seven areas see Dale R. Stoffer, "The Background and Development of Thought and Practice in the German Baptist Brethren (Dunker) and The Brethren (Progressive) Churches (c. 1650-1979)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1980), pp. 421-48.

<sup>4</sup>Henry Holsinger in his history of the Brethren movement observed, "With the appearance of the *Visitor* was ushered in the progressive era in



the Tunker Church." Henry R. Holsinger, *Holsinger's History of the Tunkers and The Brethren Church* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1901; reprinted, North Manchester, Indiana: L. W. Shultz, 1962), p. 470.

<sup>5</sup>In 1856 Holsinger served a one year apprenticeship. He did not extend his training period because he was disappointed that Kurtz did not follow his suggestion to make the *Gospel Visitor* into a weekly.

<sup>6</sup>Another grave concern of the Old Order Brethren was that Brethren schools might cultivate the desire for an educated ministry which would preach "for hire." See Marcus Miller, "Roots by the River," *Ashland Theological Bulletin* 8 (Spring 1975): 56-57.

<sup>7</sup>For a thorough study of the plain dress of the Brethren see Esther Fern Rupel, "An Investigation of the Origin, Significance, and Demise of the Prescribed Dress Worn by Members of the Church of the Brethren" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1971).

<sup>8</sup>Feetwashing, the love feast, and the eucharist comprise the three parts of the Brethren observance of Communion.

<sup>9</sup>F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, Studies in the History of Religions, No. 9 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), p. 30.

<sup>10</sup>For a more detailed discussion of the evolution of Annual Meeting see Stoffer, "Thought and Practice," pp. 326-36.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel Murray, George V. Siler, and Samuel Kinsey, "The Brethren's Reasons," in *Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Old German Baptist Brethren from 1778 to 1955*, Publishing Committee (Covington, Ohio: Little Printing Company, 1956), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Publishing Committee, *Minutes of the Old German Baptist Brethren*, pp. 502-503.

<sup>13</sup>Holsinger, *Tunkers*, pp. 531-33. These points are taken from a document prepared immediately following the expulsion of Holsinger and other Progressives from the church in 1882. It is interesting that the Progressives, in criticising the Conservatives in this document, used terminology similar to that which the Old Orders had used during the preceding decade in attacking the Progressive elements in the church. For example, the Progressives declared their "independence from all innovations and additions" introduced by the Conservatives regarding church polity and decried the "continued departures from the primitive simplicity of the Christian faith in almost every essential feature of gospel liberty and church rule." Of course the innovations and departures for the Progressives were defined in terms of the principle of "gospel liberty" while for the Old Orders they were defined in terms of the principle of continuity with the "ancient order of the Brethren."

<sup>14</sup>J. W. Beer, "The Old and Sure Foundation," *The Progressive Christian* (hereafter *PC*) 3 (November 11, 1881): 1 and P. H. Beaver, "Wild Shots," *PC* 3 (July 1, 1881):4.

<sup>15</sup>Henry R. Holsinger and Stephen H. Bashor, "Progressive Unity—Our Principles Defined," *PC* 3 (October 7, 1881):2.

<sup>16</sup>Holsinger, *Tunkers*, p. 534. Holsinger's most infamous attack against

the Standing Committee occurred in an article in which he compared it to a secret organization (the Brethren strictly forbade participation in such societies) with (1) a room to itself, (2) a door-keeper, (3) sessions held with closed doors, (4) exclusion of the press, (5) exclusion of all but the third degree ministry (ordained elders), and (6) secrets which are not to be revealed. H. R. Holsinger, "Is the Standing Committee a Secret Organization?" *PC* 1 (June 27, 1879): 2.

<sup>17</sup>The General Mission Board, *Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Church of the Brethren, Containing all Available Minutes from 1778 to 1909* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Publishing House, 1909), Art. 5, p. 408.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 421.

<sup>19</sup>R. H. Miller, "Liberties," *The Brethren at Work* (hereafter *BAW*) 7 (January 12, 1882), quoted in Kerby Lauderdale, "Division among the German Baptist Brethren" (M. Div. Independent Study, Bethany Theological Seminary, 1968), p. 83.

<sup>20</sup>Peter Nead, "The Restoration of Primitive Christianity. No. 43," *The Vindicator* 7 (January 1876): 2.

<sup>21</sup>Samuel Kinsey, "Business Thoughts for Annual Meeting," *The Vindicator* 9 (June 1878): 183-84.

<sup>22</sup>Henry R. Holsinger, "What Is the General Order?" *PC* 3 (January 28, 1881): 2. The Progressive position was well summarized in the often cited adage: "In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, and in all things charity."

<sup>23</sup>*Idem*, *Tunkers*, p. 486.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 535. The historiography of the Old Orders and Progressives is noteworthy. Whereas the Old Orders idealized the Brethren of the 1820s and 30s, the Progressives idealized their conception of the eighteenth century Brethren (before the development of the "order of the Brethren").

<sup>25</sup>J. H. Moore, "Due Respect to Our Fathers," *BAW* 7 (June 20, 1882): 4.

<sup>26</sup>The difference between the Conservatives and Progressives on this point is one of degree only. The degrees of difference between the three groups can be illustrated by noting the concern of each group regarding the availability of the minutes of past Annual Meetings. The Old Orders not only print the minutes for each Annual Meeting following the gathering, but they make available as needed (editions in 1917, 1944, 1955, 1971, and 1981) a single volume containing all the extant minutes of Annual Meetings (beginning in 1778). The Church of the Brethren also prints minutes following each Annual Meeting, but only the minutes from 1945 on are still in print. The last complete edition of the minutes was published in 1909 "for historical value." The Brethren Church (Progressives) publish only the year by year proceedings of their Annual Conference. They have *never* published a collection of past minutes.

<sup>27</sup>Quoted in Albert T. Ronk, *History of the Brethren Church* (Ashland, Ohio: Brethren Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 90-91.

<sup>28</sup>J. H. Moore, "Our Reflector," *BAW* 6 (October 18, 1881): 633.

<sup>29</sup>Note Holsinger's remarks about the lack of education found among the leadership of the church.

"I can even now close my eyes and name a dozen churches with whose elders I was personally acquainted who could not read intelligently a chapter from the Bible or a hymn from a hymnbook, nor write an intelligent notice or announcement of a communion meeting for a paper. Some of them could deliver a pretty fair discourse in an extemporaneous way, more or less satisfactory to the people of the community in which they lived, but the more discreet of them could not attempt to preach at a strange place or in a town."

Holsinger, *Tunkers* pp. 473-74.

<sup>30</sup>See idem and Stephen H. Bashor, "The Issue," *PC* 3 (October 14, 1881): 2 and J. H. Worst, *Customs and Usages or the Order of the Church* (Ashland, Ohio: H. R. Holsinger & Co., 1883), pp. 1-16.

<sup>31</sup>For a more detailed discussion of the differences between revivalism and the early Brethren view of conversion and the church see Stoffer, "Thought and Practice," pp. 354-56, 499-501.

## J. ALLEN MILLER, 1866-1935

by Richard E. Allison

The spirit and genius of the Brethren, says Dr. J. Allen Miller, are to be found in the life of the community. To appreciate it one must enter it. The reference is not to narrow idiosyncrasies but those "magnificent traits of Christian conduct, the unfaltering devotion to convictions, the honesty and integrity of character and loyalty to the church and the Word of God."<sup>1</sup> This quiet and peaceful lifestyle flowed on as a deep stream of spiritual righteousness. The fraternal fellowship was simple and sincere. These are the traits that improve with the years. This calls for a heroic, self-sacrificing spirit able to live in distinction from the culture with the goal being Christ-like character.



J. Allen Miller

Thus it is that this man more than any other epitomized historic Brethren ideals in the years following the 1883 division.<sup>2</sup> He illustrated the tension Brethren have experienced between Spirit and Word, the internal and external, faith and obedience, personal faith and corporate responsibility, the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history.

As Dr. Miller began his term as president of Ashland College, he began by parting the weeds on the campus and kneeling in prayer. He wanted for himself and his students an intelligent and reasonable faith. His Lord was Christ and his book was the Bible and his faith was that of the Brethren.<sup>3</sup> The first third of the century has been dominated by his Christocentric faith, scholarship and devotion.

His origins are simple. Born near Rossville, Indiana on August 20, 1866 to a teacher father and a "PK" mother. He followed in the footsteps of his father and began teaching school at seventeen. At eighteen he united with the Brethren Church at Edna Mills, Indiana. Within a few months following baptism he was called to ministry and began preaching.

In 1887 he entered Ashland College graduating four years later with an A.B. degree. While at Ashland he pastored the Glenford, Ohio Brethren Church (1890-92). Following graduation he moved to Elkhart, Indiana where he served the Brethren Church (1891-1894) and attended Hillsdale College. In 1894 he began forty-one years of ministry at Ashland College and Seminary. The church



had prevailed upon him to leave his pastorate and fill the term of the ailing president, S.S. Garst. This he did but resigned two years later to pursue additional studies at Hiram College earning the B.D. degree in 1898. While at Hiram, J. Allen Miller wrote a series of articles on "Divine Self-Revelation" that were published in the *Brethren Evangelist* as a series of six articles (1896).

In the fall of 1898, Dr. Miller opened Ashland College in what is reckoned as the beginning of the modern history of the school. It has been in continuous operation since that time. His philosophy of life was that "this is God's world and he had a plan for it and he will not permit it to fail. It is a plan in which good is intended for his people, and he will bring it to pass."<sup>4</sup>

This philosophy expressed the confidence and assurance of the man. He had an unquenchable optimism that would neither turn back nor retreat when he had set out on a path. Energetic, industrious, loyal, with resoluteness he forged ahead. When he resigned as president in 1906, the college was debt free, possessing an adequate endowment and with an enrollment that had greatly increased.

He was appointed dean of the theological department of Ashland College at this time. His duties included outlining courses, arranging for the teaching staff and director of student Christian work.<sup>5</sup> In addition he served as Vice President of the College.

As a student, Dr. Miller had characteristics that students today would do well to emulate. He was thorough, painstaking, and efficient in his day-to-day work. He was nearly always a shade superior intellectually to his colleagues upon their own admission. He had a passion for accuracy, for correctness and detail. This laid the foundation for the solid and enduring scholarship which won him the respect of the Brethren.

Dr. Miller was a dominant figure in the denomination throughout his lifetime.<sup>6</sup> He served with distinction from 1895 on the Committee of Ten on church polity (1895), the Committee of Three on General Conference rules (1901), the Committee of Twenty-five on church polity (1912) and the Committee of Twenty-five which formulated the "Message of the Brethren Ministry" (1920). He authored the preamble to the above work. In addition he served two terms as moderator of the General Conference (1907 and 1924) and on several occasions served as moderator of the Ohio District Conference.

The quality that suited him for this work was that when "... profound and controversial issues had reached a dead-lock, he was first to reach a certain unhesitating assurance of conviction which seldom failed to carry conviction and endorsement."<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Miller served as president of the Foreign Missionary society

from its inception (1903) until the time of his death. In addition he was elected as the first president of the board of directors of the Brethren's Home and served until his death. In addition he was elected to several terms on the Publication Board.

He was an active, constructive member of the Ashland community serving on the Civil Service Commission of the city and the committee that established the commission form of government. He was a member of Rotary and served as its president. He was widely known and respected in the community.

His students remember Dr. Miller as a man carrying an armload of books to class. He lectured from the text of numerous books rather than from copious notes.<sup>8</sup> His home was filled with beloved volumes with which he had an intimate acquaintance. He knew his books and where to find anything he wanted. He knew the page to which to turn and where on the page the statement was to be found. He displayed exceptional ability in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. "His technical skill in Biblical languages and his unqualified commitment to the authority of God's revelation through Christ in the Word made Miller a highly respected exegete."<sup>9</sup>

His breadth and openness as a scholar is evident in the following:

We must hold a faith that is reasonable, intelligent and compelling. We ought never as ministers and teachers of the Word of God have to beg the question when asked for the grounds upon which our faith rests by replying evasively or charging our questioners with unbelief. . . . I plead for an informed and intelligent ministry. I covet a ministry for the Brethren church that knows the grounds upon which faith can be rested, —grounds that can not be shaken by any discovery of history, science or philosophy.<sup>10</sup>

As a preacher, he was an expositor rather than topical. His knowledge of scripture made this approach natural. He not only knew the Book better than most, but he also had a personal acquaintance with the land of the book having visited the Holy Land in 1926. In addition he knew people, their characteristics, and loved them. Physically he was rather frail but he excelled spiritually and intellectually.

He was a person who held positive convictions. At the same time he was not at all contentious in defending them. As Martin Shively has written:

In fact he was not at all inclined to argue in defense of any position, but it would have been something of an undertaking to have tried to change his opinions. He seems to have gone thoroughly into any question which came to him for solution, and when a conclusion was reached, that end had been achieved as a result of careful study and thought, and while he was always open minded, and inclined to yield to the inevitable, his convictions were rarely affected. He was distinctly a man of peace, not only for his own

sake, but especially for the sake of the church which he loved with devotion which was absolute. That beatitude which says, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God,' entitled him to such a distinction, for he not only loved peace, but made every possible effort to preserve it in every relation with which he was connected.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Miller exemplifies more than any other what it means to be Brethren. Many gain renown for intellectual abilities. Few attain a life of saintliness. Others excel in service. Dr. Miller excelled in all the above. There is a moral beauty to his Christian character. There is a profound depth to his Christian scholarship and there is a childlike simplicity to his faith.<sup>12</sup>

The thought life of Dr. Miller is to be discerned from the book *Christian Doctrine*, a work published posthumously by his students from his lecture notes; a short work prepared as Sunday school lesson outlines entitled *Doctrinal Statements* (1922); several pamphlets such as "A Brief Sketch of The Brethren" and over one hundred articles that appeared in the *Brethren Evangelist*. "Even though each of these treatments derives from a different decade of his life, his seminal thoughts remain quite consistent."<sup>13</sup>

Miller's thought is thoroughly christocentric. The eternal purposes of God are centered in Jesus Christ. It is Christ that has perfectly manifested the will of the Father. It is Christ who effected man's redemption by his atoning death. It is Christ who assists man to first see his infinite possibilities.

Scripture is the sole and sufficient authority illustrated in the following:

Jesus Christ came into our world as God's Son, incarnate in perfect man;

Jesus Christ spoke for God to men; he revealed the will of God to Men;

Jesus Christ commanded men to hear his message, believe it and obey it.

This Message which he revealed personally and through chosen men is the New Testament; as such record it is God's Revelation given through Inspiration.<sup>14</sup>

The scriptures are not to be worshipped, but the Christ of the scriptures. The scriptures point to him. The scriptures are a "perfect revelation", "a complete revelation" and "a final revelation". The Word is divinely inspired and helps us to know the will of God. The New Testament is to be viewed as the fulfillment of the Old Testament, therefore, biblical revelation is to be viewed progressively.

Dr. Miller believed in the inspiration of scripture. This is due to the God-inbreathed influence enabling chosen persons to communicate the revelation of God.<sup>15</sup> He held that scripture exhibits both divine and human aspects. At points one finds the very words which God directed and at other points, the words are those of the writer.



Thus Miller steered a course between the fundamentalist and liberal controversies of his day.

Miller's approach to interpretation is seen in the following principles:

1. Every passage has but one true meaning.
2. There is, therefore, a unity of Biblical truth.
3. The meaning of each passage is capable of being investigated.<sup>16</sup>

Miller continues by giving a series of rules for interpreting the scriptures. He relied upon light from historical and literary criticism. He insisted that the interpretation be contextual.

Miller harbors none of the antipathy toward reason found among the early Brethren. Rather he is far more typical of his age in mirroring a fairly optimistic view of the powers of reason. He declared:

... the New Testament is and must remain our ultimate source of information and the final word of authority. One must of necessity hold some philosophic world-view. But there must be consistency in one's thinking and one's conclusions ought not contradict this philosophy and dare not be contrary to the Teachings of Christ and the New Testament Revelation.<sup>17</sup>

Miller's theological approach is biblical rather than systematic. This is characteristic of Brethren. Corroborating scriptures are important. Controversial topics are avoided. Technical theological terms are rare. He cites few scholars and does not interact with other theological positions. His thrust is to search the scriptures to discern the will of God. Sin is accepted as a fact. Its origin is not explored. This leads to the discussion of redemption provided by God in Christ. Miller rejects the idea that newly born children are guilty sinners before God. Guilt is not inherited or transmitted. A tendency to sin is what is inherited. We begin with a predisposition to sin.<sup>18</sup> Quickly Miller closes the door on any possibility of self redemption. Redemption is provided by God and there is no redemption except in Christ.

Miller does not become embroiled in a theory of the atonement. Rather, he is content to review the biblical materials. He wrote:

In the voluntary offering of Jesus Christ as a ransom for the sins of the many we have an everlasting redemption brought in, and upon which offering as a ransom redemption is effected. Further we may add that faith upon man's part brings him into a relation of gracious acceptance with God and adoption into sonship.<sup>19</sup>

The conditions of salvation recognized by Miller coincide with those of the early Brethren namely enlightenment, faith, repentance, obedience.<sup>20</sup> Obedience implies confession, baptism and confirmation. These several acts are what is meant by conversion. He sees salvation as a process encompassing "deliverance from the



present evil world and its sin and the enjoyment of all the blessings of children of God."<sup>21</sup> Salvation is a process whose goal is the ideal exemplified by Christ. Regeneration follows and has both a divine and a human side.

The church for Miller is the gathering of faithful ones which was the clear intention of Jesus very early in his ministry. Thus the church is not a mixed multitude, but a body of believers in Christ who have been called out of the world, have been born again of the Holy Spirit, and are therefore alive in Christ, and who, under the authority of Christ, are accomplishing the will of God on earth and among men.<sup>22</sup> This precludes Christians living apart from the church.

The strong, highly developed ecclesiology overshadows the space given to the ordinances of baptism by trine immersion and communion. Baptism is important as already noted in the order of salvation. The trine mode is determined by conflating the teachings of scripture, the practice of the Apostolic age, the meaning of the Greek word for baptism and supported by the opinions of leading scholars. The order for the threefold communion service is pedalavium, agape and eucharist.

The pedalavium is supported by John 13 and is a fitting symbol of service. The agape symbolizes brotherhood, fellowship and looks forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The eucharist is a symbolic remembrance of Jesus. Other ordinances include the laying on of hands, anointing for healing and the kiss of peace.

In a sermon on "The Quest of a Warless World",<sup>23</sup> Dr. Miller says:

WE ARE CONSCIENTIOUS NON-RESISTANTS. This is the Historic position of the Church. We insist that MORAL and SPIRITUAL Issues can not be arbitrated by FORCE. War is basically a moral issue. An appeal to ARMS is an appeal to brute force. Force can never make a wrong and an injustice, right and just, whether as between man and man or Nation and Nation. We refuse to be partners to the settlement of a moral issue on the basis that might makes right. And we are conscientious in this matter. WE ARE CHRISTIAN. We take the Bible seriously as the very Word of God; therefore we observe to the letter many of its teachings which are commonly disregarded. . . . We hold literally to the teachings of Jesus. . . . For the same reason we are Non-resistants. It is our inmost conviction of reasoned thought and an overwhelming sense of divine compulsion that impels us to take our stand against WAR as un-Christian and therefore sinful.

Miller's eschatology is determined by his emphasis on the didactic and narrative passages of the New Testament rather than the apocalyptic passages.<sup>24</sup> He holds that the separation of the wicked from the saints occurs at death. Christians receive a resurrection

body at death. The ultimate destiny of the wicked is a mystery which he is unable to resolve.

Interestingly, Miller questions the idea of a secret rapture and a great tribulation to follow. He taught:

Then there is the teaching concerning the great tribulation. We are told by some that the coming of the Lord divides itself into the unseen presence of the Lord in the air, and that the living saints and the dead saints will meet him up there all unknown to the rest of the world here; then, the Church being taken out, there will be a great tribulation. I can't find it in the Scriptures. I shall be glad to have anyone find it for me. Let me tell you what it is. It means the personal presence. In every passage I have found, every passage in the New Testament, the Parousia or presence everywhere and always means the personal presence; or one man in the presence of others. . . . As for the great tribulation as mentioned in the apocalyptic writings, this one tribulation, I think a fair exegesis will show, refers to the overthrow of Jerusalem and the persecution of the Jews.<sup>25</sup>

Miller views the kingdom as the greatest theme of the New Testament. Everything there looks forward to its realization.<sup>26</sup> Christ's personal return will precipitate the final crisis which will usher in the age to come.

Dr. Miller died March 27, 1935 at Ashland, Ohio. He stands as the epitomy of what it means to be Brethren. Steeped in the Word as interpreted through the life of Christ, he sought light wherever he could find it. He held convictions firmly, but did not press them upon others. He stood with Protestantism where he could, and went beyond at other points, stressing commitment to the Gospel and calling for this to emerge through the body, which is the agency through which God is working out his plan in the present age. The kingdom is the goal.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>George W. Rench, "In Memorium: As A Church Leader," *The Brethren Evangelist*, LVII, No. 17 (April 27, 1935), pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Background and Development of Thought and Practice in The German Baptist Brethren and The Brethren Churches" (Ph. D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1980), p. 620.

<sup>3</sup>Clara Worst Miller and E. Glenn Mason, *A Short History of Ashland College to 1953* (Ashland, Ohio: Brethren Publishing Company, 1953).

<sup>4</sup>Martin Shively, "Some Brethren Church Leaders of Yesterday As I Knew Them: J. Allen Miller, H.M., D.D.," *The Brethren Evangelist*, LVII, No. 32 (August 17, 1935), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Miller and Mason, p. 51.

<sup>6</sup>Stoffer, p. 622.

<sup>7</sup>William D. Furry, "Introductory Note of Appreciation" in J. Allen Miller's *Christian Doctrine: Lectures and Sermons* (Ashland, Ohio: Brethren Publishing Company, 1946), p. xiv.

<sup>8</sup>From a class lecture by Delbert B. Flora, April 1982.

<sup>9</sup>Stoffer, p. 623.

<sup>10</sup>J. Allen Miller, "The Sure Foundation," *Brethren Evangelist*, L (December 29, 1928), p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>Shively, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>A. J. McClain, "The Faith of Doctor Miller," *Ashland College Bulletin*, VIII, No. 7 (May, 1935).

<sup>13</sup>Stoffer, p. 625.

<sup>14</sup>Miller, "Sure Foundation," p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Miller, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 118.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>18</sup>J. Allen Miller, "Sin And Human Need IV," *Brethren Evangelist*, XXXII, No. 32 (July 7, 1910), p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>Miller, *Christian Doctrine*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-52.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 334-35.

<sup>24</sup>Stoffer, p. 672.

<sup>25</sup>Miller, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 226.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 228.

# THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE BRETHREN ELDER

by Jack L. Oxenrider

What is the role of the elder within the tradition and polity of The Brethren Church? The term elder is the predominant historical designation for "pastor" in The Brethren Church. When persons were/are ordained to the Brethren pastoral ministry, it is to the office of elder. Preacher, minister, bishop, elder, helper, pastor, exhorter, and reverend are various designations which have been used throughout Brethren history to refer to this role.<sup>1</sup> The late twentieth century finds the role designated by the terms preacher, minister, elder, or pastor.

Traditional definitions and pastoral models will not suffice due to the uniqueness of Brethren polity. Brethren Church polity is Believers' Church polity.<sup>2</sup> The genius of Brethren polity was best captured by Alexander Mack, Jr. in the Second Preface to *The Rights and Ordinances of the House of God*. There he said:

These eight persons (the original Brethren) united with one another as brethren and sisters in the covenant of the cross of Jesus Christ as a church of Christian believers.<sup>3</sup>

The role of the Brethren elder should be defined by its ecclesiology, but the Brethren have no systematic ecclesiology. "The Brethren avoided creeds and confessions. . . ."<sup>4</sup> The texts of Scripture constitute Brethren ecclesiology. Thus, the elder's role is defined by Scriptural teaching and example.

The use of the term "elder" within The Brethren Church was derived from the New Testament. The Greek word *presbyteros*, which is translated elder, is used in three different ways: (1) The "elders of Israel", (2) The senior/aged members of the church, and (3) A technical reference to leadership. The model for the New Testament elder is rooted within the "elders of Israel" and the Old Testament cultural reverence for their character, counsel, and ability.<sup>5</sup>

The term "elder" is used throughout the New Testament as an inclusive designation for varied functions of leadership which included apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, deacon, and bishop. Within the New Testament definition of the role, there is neither hierarchical nor sacerdotal distinction. Thus, the elders were not the unquestioned authorities of the church who made all decisions, controlled the organization, practice, and future direction of a congregation. Neither were they endowed with special "priestly" powers to mediate between God and man. They were people selected by God, through the church, to serve (Acts 14:23, I Timothy 5:22, Titus 1:5, Philippians 1:1).



Because of their wise and respected counsel, the growing maturity of their Christian character, their accumulated experience and ability in ministry, they were often influential in the direction of the church. They were leaders because the church respected their personal character and abilities in ministry. They were granted power and authority by the church, yet they were the servants of the church both subordinate and accountable to it.

In the New Testament, great care and detail are given to characterize the kind of person who is best able to fulfill the role of elder. The New Testament calls for careful discernment by the church in the process of selecting its leaders (Titus 1:5-9, I Timothy 3:1-7, II Timothy 2:24-26).

The duties which are to be fulfilled are pastoring, ruling, preaching, teaching, and evangelizing. In every case, the elders were not the only ones who performed these ministries; yet, these ministries were a major part of their function and were essential to their congregational service (I Peter 5:1-5, I Timothy 5:17-18, II Timothy 4:1-5). When the church "set apart" elders, it placed itself under their leadership, pastoral care, preaching, and teaching. The congregation had responsibility of the care of the elder (I Timothy 5:17-18).

The New Testament displays and teaches interdependence, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability between the elders and the congregations. Elder and people were equally a part of the *koinonia* community.<sup>6</sup>

It was the desire of the early Brethren (1708-1735) to reflect the New Testament Church in their faith and practice. While they may not have achieved a perfect likeness to the primitive church, there was a similarity. They were able, to a degree, to leap back 1600 years to recapture in a different culture and time the basic essence of the primitive church.

There were four prevalent values within the mind of the first Brethren of 1708 which influenced the formation of the role and position of the elder: (1) The Brethren had an aversion to ecclesiastical hierarchy,<sup>7</sup> (2) The Brethren position of leadership was shaped by the Pietistic-Anabaptist influence,<sup>8</sup> (3) The early Brethren desired to recapture the practices and faith of the New Testament Church,<sup>9</sup> (4) The early Brethren adhered to the Bible as it read.<sup>10</sup> It was the balance of these four values which shaped The Brethren Church and, consequently, the elder.

The early Brethren never wrote a theology of the church; there is no ecclesiology. They never wrote a theology of the elder; there is no pastoral theology. Yet, an understanding of the values which shaped the early Brethren and an observance of the tasks which the early Brethren leaders performed can help us to remold an

impression of the elder within the early Brethren Church.

From the very conception of The Brethren Church, there has been a continuing recognition and practice of accepting, choosing, and following leaders. The early Brethren clearly accepted the interpretation of Gottfried Arnold on leadership. Arnold taught that there was no essential difference between the early church leaders, including apostle, prophet, teacher, preacher, and deacon. He further believed the elder, as a general term, could be applied to every position of Christian leadership.

For the early Brethren, there was little distinction between leader and laity. The baptism account of 1708 details the extreme measures the early Brethren employed to maintain equality. Alexander Mack, Sr., as leader, baptized the other seven. This marked the beginning of The Brethren Church; yet, at the same time, he was baptized by them. The care and discipline which characterizes the first baptism is an example of the balance which existed within the early Brethren Church between the leader and the people. This example captures the very essence of the Brethren spirit with regard to the role of the elder and the leadership model for The Brethren Church.<sup>11</sup>

The leadership Mack exercised within the early Brethren Church demonstrated that he was indeed the elder in the New Testament sense of the word. As Dale Stoffer has written:

It was to a large measure due to Mack's preaching, teaching, and writing skill that the young church expanded to several locations in Germany. Finally, it was as a result of his pastoral leadership that the scattered and, at times, disillusioned flock of Brethren who had come to America achieved a new sense of community and mission.<sup>12</sup>

His [Alexander Mack's] Christian character appears to have been that of a primitive follower of Christ. Humility, zeal, self-denial, charity were conspicuous among the graces that adorned his character. The high estimation in which he was held by his brethren is seen in the circumstances that he was chosen by them to be their master. He was the first minister of a little Christian community organized in Schwarzenau in 1708, and labored zealously and successfully to enlarge the borders of their Zion. Of his private character as a Christian father, we may infer favorably from these circumstances that all his sons became pious and were united with the church before they had completed their 17th year.<sup>13</sup>

The choosing of leaders became a growing practice for the Brethren. In 1729, Alexander Mack journeyed to America and settled in Germantown where he assisted Peter Becker, the elder of that congregation.<sup>14</sup> Conrad Beissel served the Brethren at Conestoga. The early Brethren considered an elder to be an essential ingredient of a fully organized and recognized congregation.<sup>15</sup> By 1720, there was

a distinct organization of The Brethren Church and a clear practice of choosing and ordaining leaders.<sup>16</sup>

The mid-eighteenth century witnessed a distinct practice of Brethren worship. The characteristics of this worship exemplify the position of the elder within the early Brethren community. It also exemplifies the degree to which the brotherhood had taken organizational shape.<sup>17</sup>

The second period of Brethren history (1736-1880) is that of organization and development which followed the death of the first generation leadership. This period was marked by a process of institutionalization. The elders were the key contributors to the institutionalization, and it powerfully affected their role. This period of approximately 150 years reveals a consistent pattern of change. There was a rise in the elder's power and what appeared to be a growing separation between clergy and laity. There was a continuing policy of the elder's subjection to the church, but the elders developed such power and control that, for all practical purposes, they were the church.

During the first twenty-five years of The Brethren Church in America there was consistent growth which centered around Germantown. The pastoral leadership was a key element of this growth. As a Brethren historian writes:

The leadership in the eighteenth century congregation at Germantown was outstanding. It included such personalities as Peter Becker, Alexander Mack, Sr., Alexander Mack, Jr., and the two Christopher Sauers. In 1788, the congregation elected to the ministry a man named Peter Keyser, Jr., whose ministry was destined to span the period of the eclipse of Germantown by Philadelphia. He was a minister in Germantown and Philadelphia for sixty-one years and an elder for forty-seven. No man is more truly linked between Colonial and American time than that of Peter Keyser, Jr.<sup>18</sup>

Pennsylvania is one example of the kind of growth in that period. The Brethren in Pennsylvania grew to approximately fifteen congregations, in excess of 700 members. During this time, the Brethren began to move toward "levels" in ministry. Of the fifteen churches which existed in the brotherhood in 1770, there were twenty-one ministries; eight were ordained elders and thirteen held a lower degree of ministry referred to as "exhorters."<sup>19</sup>

Morgan Edwards summarizes his historical research into the early Brethren with these words:

... in this province fifteen churches of Tunker Baptist, to which appertain eight ordained ministers, elders or bishops, and thirteen exhorters, or probationers. . . . We see also that their families are about 419, which contain about 2,095 souls allowing five to a family whereas 763 persons were baptized and in communion.<sup>20</sup>



By the year 1780, there were clear and accepted practices within the church which were referred to as "the way of the Brethren." These were unstated attitudes and assumptions which were felt to characterize Brethren tradition and polity. As Annual Meeting began to take power and authority within the church, the "way of the Brethren" began to be written down. Thus, there came to be a standard of polity and tradition for the church. Donald Durnbaugh has stated:

The Yearly Meeting, held at Pentecost, brought together most of the elders and many of the other members. A committee of elders which came to be called Standing Committee prepared the business for presentation to the assembly. Decision was by unanimous consent. If there was a difference of opinion, the matter would be set back for a year.<sup>21</sup>

The first Annual Meeting was held in 1742. The records of *The Classified Minutes of Annual Meeting* begin in 1778. The meeting was initiated by the elders who consequently took responsibility for leadership. This set in motion an increasing control of the elders over the church.

During the period of 1776 to 1850, the elders gained prominence within the brotherhood. There were few congregations who were without ministers, and these ministers had growing respect and authority within the church. "Ministers were elected by the congregation so a church seldom lacked an elder for any more than a brief period of time."<sup>22</sup> The main responsibility of the elder during this period was to preach, baptize, counsel, and "rule" through the giving of opinion and direction. Stoffer explains:

Brethren preaching (at this time period) tended to be devotional, emphasizing such typically Brethren themes of self-denial, non-conformity, discipleship to Christ, obedience to the precepts of the Scripture, love of God and one's neighbor; somewhat apologetic, defending the Brethren view of baptism and the love feast, especially; evangelical, based on one biblical text which the speaker developed by using biblical and non-biblical illustrative material; and, at times, evangelistic, giving a low-key invitation to believe in Christ.<sup>23</sup>

Institutionalization was a necessary "evil" for the Brethren. As the church grew in the number of congregations, baptized believers, and elders, and as they were spread geographically throughout the United States, organization became necessary. *The Classified Minutes of the Annual Meeting of The Brethren* give a general overview of the issues which faced the Brethren and how these issues were handled.<sup>24</sup>

The first issue was the three-degree ministry or three stages in the ordination process to eldership or "full ministry." The minutes of Annual Meeting reveal the development of a three-degree Breth-



ren ministry. In 1864 and again in 1865, the question of a three-degree ministry came to Annual Meeting. The origin of the three-degree ministry within The Brethren Church is very difficult to trace. There seemed to be no historical arguments for its development. Rather, it appears that it was a practice which was slowly accepted into the church. As mentioned earlier, by 1760 there had developed a two-stage ministry and, by 1860, there was a fully defined three-stage ministry within the church. Church historians believe that the three-stage ministry within the Brethren was adopted from their Mennonite brothers.<sup>25</sup>

It was during the late 1700s and early 1800s that some clear distinctions and identifications within the church offices began to develop. A bishop was in charge of overseeing the various degrees of elder within the specific church. Durnbaugh noted:

The church leaders were elected by the entire church membership (male and female). . . . This meeting usually produced the most able, or at least sincere, leadership. Congregations appreciated but did not demand eloquence. Since there were ordinarily several ministers in the congregation, different talents could come into play. Some were known as excellent counselors and administrators of church affairs, while others were known for their preaching.

No salary was paid to ministers, although expenses might be reimbursed. . . . Church officers were chosen for life. Eldership entailed an extra sacrifice for this involved much travel to other congregations. Most of the men had limited schooling but they applied themselves to the study of Scriptures and used the books they did own to their excellent advantage.<sup>26</sup>

Readings in journals, sermon copies, and articles from this period indicate that some developed considerable skill in their theology and work of ministry. Yet, it also becomes clear that others were very poor at handling the biblical text and spoke more from prejudiced opinion and church tradition than from the model of the first century church and the teachings of Scripture.

The second issue was the elder's relation to the church. The outstanding characteristic of the nineteenth century Brethren Church was the elder-controlled church. General conference was largely influenced and controlled by elders.<sup>27</sup> Foremost in the historical mind of the Brethren has been a question of the relationship of the elder to the church. Thus, Annual Meeting repeatedly dealt with questions which referred to the elder's relationship to the church. All their decisions maintained the authority of the church over the elder.<sup>28</sup>

The decisions of Annual Meeting continually reaffirmed the principle that the congregation was the decision-making community and that the elders should always consult the congregation. When

there was a difference in opinion, the congregation had the final word. Such an attitude not only reflects the Brethren of 1708, but it is also characteristic of the New Testament Church. Such a balance of power is an essential element to the life of the brotherhood. Within the organization of a Believers' Church the elders must be accountable to the church.

It is not surprising that the growth and expansion of The Brethren Church, coupled with the institutional character of Annual Meeting, was to bring about controversy. There were several areas of controversy which rose to the surface between the years of 1860 and 1882. These controversies led to a major schism of the church which resulted in the birth of The Brethren Church based in Ashland, Ohio.

The elder was at the center of the controversy with issues such as a paid ministry and a mono-pastoral system. The paid ministry was first introduced to The Brethren Church in 1860. The one pastor system began to grow as the Brethren expanded throughout the northwest and midwest, resulting in more contact with the styles of other Christian churches. Thus, the mono-pastoral model became an option.

Another controversy which developed during this period was the power of the elder within Annual Meeting.

In 1868, Annual Meeting agreed that the Standing Committee should be composed of representatives elected by the representative districts of the church, rather than being selected by the elders of the church hosting the Annual Meeting.<sup>29</sup>

Such a decision was an obvious reaction to the power which the elders had maintained within Annual Meeting.

The year 1851 has traditionally been recognized as the pivotal point in the Brethren history, for in April of that year, Henry Kurtz began his monthly paper the *Gospel Visitor*, at Poland, Ohio.<sup>30</sup>

Henry Holsinger, the leader of the Progressives, calls the period between 1850 and 1880 "transitional" and states that "with the appearance of the *Visitor* was ushered in the Progressive era in the Tunker Church."<sup>31</sup> *The Christian Family Companion* and its successor, *The Primitive Christian*, became the "soapboxes" for the Progressive movement of the church. These papers began to offer criticism of the existing structures within the brotherhood and called for progressive reform.

The competence of the elders began to be questioned. While there were many elders who fulfilled their jobs well and who were skilled at church administration, preaching, and teaching, there were elders who were poor at these functions and who were unable to lead

congregations. The Progressive movement saw a solution to these problems in the full-time pastor and the mono-pastoral ministry. The emphasis of the Progressive Brethren was not upon the pay, the profession, or the lone pastor, but upon the education, training, and total devotion to the work of ministry. James Quinter said in 1878:

In our travels among the churches and our observation in regards to the causes of trouble and difficulties with which these churches are so often afflicted, we have been painfully impressed with the circumstance that we frequently find that the preachers are not implicated in the troubles, but apparently their indiscretion or misconduct has been the cause of the trouble. We are therefore fearful that our ministers do not always appreciate the great responsibility that rests upon them or the effects of their influence upon the church.<sup>32</sup>

While this criticism could not be leveled against all elders and congregations within the brotherhood, there was growing concern. Tension and controversy surrounded the church in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It equally surrounded the elder.

The schism of the early 1880s within the German Baptist Church led to radical reforms within the Progressive element. The Progressive Brethren, under the leadership of Henry Holsinger, were incorporated in Ashland, Ohio, in the year 1883. They took the name, The Brethren Church. Stoffer wrote:

Holsinger indicates that the Progressives were especially discontented by the incompetency of many of the elders and bishops. This incompetency was a direct result of their lack of education. Holsinger felt that the German Baptist Brethren were strangling, numerically and spiritually, because their leadership lacked the education necessary to participate in the modern world.<sup>33</sup>

The most obvious changes made by the Progressive Brethren were in relation to the elder. The three-degree ministry was quickly abolished and a single-degree ministry, marked by the ordination of the elder, was established. In 1934, a probationary period of licensure was adopted by the Brethren Ministerial Association. But there has been within the Progressive movement only one level of ordination to the office of elder.

During the first decade, there was considerable discussion over the role of elder and the relationship of the elder to the church. Henry Holsinger pointed out:

The overseers have a duty to perform and are invested with certain authority, and it is against the abuse of this authority and the usurpation of power, nor theirs, that occasionally calls for the protest of the church. The same fatal mistake is now occurring that has occurred on several occasions in the history of the



church—the elders consider themselves rulers while in reality, they are but servants.<sup>34</sup>

It was this controversy that was the central force to reshape and redefine the position and the role of the elder within the church. Yet, the abuse of the power of the elders in The German Baptist and the harsh expulsion of the Progressives by the parent church did not lead to a reactionary abandonment of the elder's role. They were able to redefine the church and the elder from the historic Pietistic-Anabaptist perspective and in relation to the New Testament Church.

The Progressive Brethren had a strong desire to follow the New Testament. The Progressive revolt was centered in the authority of tradition which was captured in the statement "the way of the Brethren." The Progressives felt that tradition had been elevated to an equal or superior position with Scripture. The model of the Progressives became "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." They considered the New Testament to be their only guide of faith and practice. This became most evident by an insignia: THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS OUR ONLY AND ALL-SUFFICIENT RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.<sup>35</sup>

*The Brethren Evangelist*, the paper for the Progressive Brethren, carried an array of articles in relation to the church and the pastor's roles, duties, and qualifications.<sup>36</sup> For example, Allen Bricker defined the elder as equivalent of pastor, teacher, and evangelist. He then defined the duties or functions of the evangelist. The roles he named are as follows: (1) Be an example to the flock (pastoring-teaching); (2) Examine and care for spiritual needs (pastoring-teaching); (3) Study and preach the Word (preaching); (4) Do the work of an evangelist (evangelizing); (5) Rule the flock (ruling).<sup>37</sup>

Henry Holsinger, who was monitor of the 1883 Convention of The Brethren which met in Dayton, Ohio, addressed the convention on the subject of the elder and called for quick and radical reforms.<sup>38</sup> The actions of the 1883 convention demonstrated that the Progressives assumed the position of an elder as a part of a Believers' Church. They considered the role and/or position of the elder to be essential, as did the early Brethren. The resulting committee report appeared to define the tasks of the elder as preaching, teaching, and ministering (or pastoring).<sup>39</sup>

The suggestion of Henry Holsinger at the 1883 conference in Dayton set a precedent for the operation of the Brethren. Following the committee report, there was a continuing flow of denominational material which defined the offices of the church and the relation of those offices to the church.

In the year 1897, the Brethren developed what they entitled, *The Manual of Church Expediency*. This manual was a forerunner of



what today is called *The Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church*. Herein the articles of faith were defined, as well as the organization of the church, its officers, and the duties of its officers.<sup>40</sup> The elder is defined as the first and only degree of ministry. The duties of the elder which are described in this manual are categorized as follows: (1) Pastoring; (2) Evangelizing; (3) Ruling (to assist in); (4) Preaching; (5) Administering the Ordinances. The polity of The Brethren Church as described in the manual gives clear authority to the church over its elders.

Approximately ten years after the publication of *The Manual of Church Expediency*, C. F. Yoder published *The Gospel Church Government*. Yoder addressed the power of the church, the officers and gifts of the apostolic church, the elders and bishops and their duties, deacon and deaconesses and their qualifications, and miscellaneous concerns with relation to church offices.<sup>41</sup> Yoder reiterates the qualifications for an elder from I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and 2, and I Timothy 4. He saw five duties for the elder within the church. They were: (1) Preaching; (2) Teaching; (3) Administering the Ordinances; (4) Ruling; (5) Evangelizing.<sup>42</sup>

In 1901, J. Allen Miller wrote an article entitled, "The Preacher and the Preaching for the Day." In the article, Miller outlines five qualifications for the preacher: (1) The preacher must be called of God; (2) The preacher must be trained in intellect; (3) The preacher must be intensely spiritual; (4) The preacher must be self-surrendered; (5) The preacher must be a prophet.<sup>43</sup>

In 1924, Miller was on a committee of three which published *The Brethren Minister's Handbook*, designed to help give uniformity in the Brethren practice. The attitude of the church toward its ministers in the early twentieth century is captured in the preface of this handbook.

The minister's duties are so varied and oft times so pressing upon him that he welcomes, if he is an earnest and effective worker, every suggestion that offers help. There is scarcely a relation of human life, no matter how sacred or joyous or how tragic or distressful to which a pastor is not called to enter. Upon all such occasions the individual resources are oft time too limited to make possible the best service. Here again the faithful and sincere worker gladly accepts any help offered. Once again the administration of the affairs of the church, the celebration of the ordinances and sacraments of the church, and the conducting of public and special services lay heavy toll on the ability and the skill of the pastor and preacher. The work of the minister should be carefully, decorously, and prayerfully done. Beauty, order, and harmony in the services, whatever their nature may be, will always attract folks to the church. Dignity, spirituality, and meaning will always edify. The right way will always be the best way. The one purpose of the handbook is expressed in the words of Paul in I Corinthians 14:40—let all things be done in dignity and in order.<sup>44</sup>

The final step of the early twentieth century which helped define the role of the elder within The Brethren Church was *The Message of the Brethren Ministry*. This action of the Brethren Ministerial Association was imposed by the fundamentalist fears that liberals were invading the church. All Brethren elders who were ordained in the brotherhood and accepted in the Brethren Ministerial Association were asked to and expected to ascribe to the articles herein.<sup>45</sup>

By the means of three items, *The Manual of Procedure* (or *Manual of Church Expediency*), *The Message of The Brethren Ministry*, and *The Brethren Minister's Handbook*, the Brethren outlined the duties of the elder and his relationship to the church. These became the accepted practice and guidelines for the elder in the early twentieth century. They continue to exercise considerable authority and influence within the church.

The Brethren Church today is a continuation of the Progressive movement and its 1883 origin. Since 1924, only three articles have been written in *The Brethren Evangelist* which discuss the Brethren understanding of elder and the duties of the elder within the church.<sup>46</sup> Within this framework, the elder is an accepted and assumed necessary position of leadership within the Believers' Church polity of The Brethren Church. The role and function of the elder in The Brethren Church today is outlined in *A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church*.<sup>47</sup> Yet there exists in The Brethren Church today a tension between the polarities of the Believers' Church and the proponents of hierarchical organization. It is in the midst of that tension that the Brethren have continued to define the role and position of the elder.

While the Brethren have never achieved a perfect reproduction of the first century church nor the New Testament practice, their desire to do so has been evident. It would be unreasonable to expect the Brethren to reproduce a carbon copy of the New Testament church. To do so would require living in a New Testament world. The best that the Brethren can hope for, or any church can hope for, is to reproduce an equivalent of the New Testament church within its culture. The elders of the twentieth century Brethren Church are the equivalent and obvious successors of their early Brethren counterparts and the New Testament elders.

The duties of the Brethren elders have been defined and redefined by the accumulated practices recorded in the Brethren history. No particular Brethren-written history has been all-inclusive in its definition of duties of the elder. Yet, historical practice has defined six specific functions which Brethren elders fulfilled: (1) Preaching; (2) Pastoring; (3) Teaching; (4) Ruling; (5) Administering the Ordinances; (6) Evangelizing.

The role of the Brethren elder has existed and has been defined in the midst of the natural tension which existed between the authority and responsibility of the office and the principles of servanthood within a Believers' Church. The brotherhood requires careful and sensitive leadership. This leadership must understand and be committed to the principles of a Believers' Church. Such was the perspective of Alexander Mack. His example of strong and capable leadership, carefully maintained within a true Believers' Church community, is exemplary.<sup>48</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Donald F. Durnbaugh, *European Origins of The Brethren* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1958), p. 340 (the 35th Question).

<sup>2</sup>I. D. Parker, "Church Polity", and D. L. Miller, ed., *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1980), p. 161.

<sup>3</sup>Durnbaugh, p. 121; also see Alexander Mack, *The Rites and Ordinances of the House of God* (Mansfield, OH: Century Printing Co., 1939), p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Background and Development of Thought and Practice in the German Baptist Brethren (Dunker) and The Brethren (Progressive) Churches (c. 1650-1979)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1980), p. 216.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Macauley Jackson, ed., *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 103.

<sup>6</sup>Jack L. Oxenrider, "Sharing Leadership in The Brethren Church: A Leadership Design for an Elder (Pastor) Within the Tradition and Polity of The Brethren Church" (D. Min. document, Ashland Theological Seminary, 1982), pp. 15-65.

<sup>7</sup>John W. Leer, "The Brethren Past and Present," *Brethren Life and Thought*, Winter 1958, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Angel M. Mergal, ed., *The Library of Christian Classics*, vol. XXV, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 240-41.

<sup>9</sup>Stoffer, p. 232.

<sup>10</sup>James H. Lehman, *The Old Brethren* (Elgin: Brethren Press, 1967), pp. 46-47.

<sup>11</sup>Durnbaugh, pp. 120-22.

<sup>12</sup>Stoffer, p. 204.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Compare Alexander Mack, *The Rites and Ordinances of the House of God* (Mansfield, OH: Century Printing Co., 1939), p. 10.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 279.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 212.
- <sup>17</sup>Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., *The Church of The Brethren, Past and Present* (Elgin: Brethren Press, 1971), p. 20.
- <sup>18</sup>Floyd E. Mallott, *Studies in Brethren History* (Elgin: Brethren Publishing House, 1954), p. 60.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., c., p. 87.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 88.
- <sup>21</sup>Durnbaugh, *Past and Present*, p. 19.
- <sup>22</sup>Stoffer, p. 316.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 319.
- <sup>24</sup>*The Classified Minutes of the Annual Meeting of The Brethren* (Mt. Morris, IL., and Huntington, PA: Brethren's Publishing Company, 1886), pp. 102-27.
- <sup>25</sup>Stoffer, pp. 324-25.
- <sup>26</sup>Durnbaugh, *Past and Present*, p. 19.
- <sup>27</sup>Leer, p. 16.
- <sup>28</sup>*Classified Minutes*, pp. 112-15.
- <sup>29</sup>Stoffer, p. 330.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 421.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup>James Quinter, "Editorial," *The Progressive Christian and Pilgrim*, August 6, 1878, p. 489.
- <sup>33</sup>Stoffer, p. 430.
- <sup>34</sup>Henry Holsinger, "Church Government," *The Progressive Christian*, September 6, 1882, p. 2.
- <sup>35</sup>Henry Holsinger, ed., *The Progressive Christian*, October 8, 1880, p. 2.
- <sup>36</sup>Oxenrider, pp. 111-13.
- <sup>37</sup>A. Bricker, "The Church and Her Officers," *The Brethren Evangelist*, June 18, 1884, p. 1.
- <sup>38</sup>Albert Ronk, *History of The Brethren Church* (Ashland: Brethren Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 171-72.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 161.
- <sup>40</sup>*The Manual of Church Expediency* (Ashland: Brethren Publishing Co., 1897), pp. 234-39.
- <sup>41</sup>C. F. Yoder, *The Gospel Church Government* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 5-25.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid.



<sup>43</sup>J. Allen Miller, "The Preacher and the Preaching for the Day," *The Brethren Evangelist*, January 3, 1901, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup>J. Allen Miller, G. W. Rensch, Dyoll Belote, eds., *The Brethren Minister's Handbook* (Ashland: Brethren Publishing Co., 1924), p. ii.

<sup>45</sup>*Minutes of the Thirty-third General Conference of The Brethren Church*, 1921 (n.p., n.d.), p. 16.

<sup>46</sup>See Delbert B. Flora, "Qualifications for the Elder," *The Brethren Evangelist*, April 9, 1949, p. 4; C. Y. Gilmer, "The Pastor and the Church Officials," *The Brethren Evangelist*, February 5, 1944, p. 6; and Albert T. Ronk, "Elders, Bishops, and their Duties," *The Brethren Evangelist*, November 29, 1958, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup>*A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church*, 1967 (n.p.), pp. 2-3.

<sup>48</sup>For a more detailed study see, Jack L. Oxenrider, "Sharing Leadership in The Brethren Church: A Leadership Design for an Elder (Pastor) Within the Tradition and Polity of The Brethren Church" (D. Min. document, Ashland Theological Seminary, 1982), available through University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

# GOD'S CALL TO THE IMPOSSIBLE

by J. Ray Klingensmith

Texts: "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Lk. 1:37).

"Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14).

The call of God to believing people seems to be something totally impossible to the unbeliever. Our belief in God who created us, and all things that exist seems preposterous to unbelievers who do not know God. They would rather ascribe all life and existence to what they call "mother nature," or more vaguely, hundreds of millions, or billions of years. They pretend that it is impossible for them to say "God". But the believer stands in awe at the vastness and complexities of all things and humbly bows before the God who created them. Thus, what to the believer is totally obvious and acceptable is just impossible to the unbeliever. And there is a reason for this, which we will discuss later.

Again, another "impossible" for the unbeliever that is fully accepted by the believer is the One called Jesus Christ. The unbeliever respects His wisdom and His moral and social works, but to believe that he is the Son of God, that His great death and resurrection were accomplished in behalf of every sinner, is just out of the question for the unbeliever. Thus, what is impossible to plain human reason is wholly acceptable through the gift and experience of faith, which every believer knows.

So the natural human mind seeks what to him is reasonable, acceptable, provable; but faith, the gospel, the Bible, go far beyond the mere human reason. As the Bible says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:9-10).

Now consider all of the "impossible" things God gives to the believer with which to witness to an unbelieving world. Everything in the Christian's arsenal of faith is just impossible to the "natural man," as the apostle Paul would say. Yet consider also how powerful and effective these "impossibles" have been to claim millions of believers for Christ. Only God knows how many hundreds of millions have given their lives to him, to serve, to believe, to go into the ministry, to become martyrs, or whatever their witness became. And there are now hundreds of millions believing and praying and working for Him regardless of how impossible it seems to those who do not have faith.

The Christians proclaim a Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. The unbeliever says "impossible". The unbeliever proclaims that such

things never happen, in fact can't happen. But God tells us to proclaim it! And hundreds of millions celebrate what they call the Christmas story which proclaims God's entrance into the human family "made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). And to make the story even more impossible this one born was called the Son of God! And he was born to an unmarried girl! And still worse, born in a barn! Now what a message to proclaim to a lost world! This one the Saviour of mankind? But it is this to which we witness. And it confounds the wisdom of the wise. And it is so unique and so out of the ordinary that only God could have brought it to pass. Thus its power.

The story continues with this One growing up as a laborer, a carpenter whose own relatives at one time thought him "mad". The religious people were always challenging and contradicting Him and trying to make Him an enemy of their religion. They could not deny His miracles and great wisdom and His divine power; but they could not give up their own reasoning to accept by faith what God had given them. So they finally proved their own carnality by having Him murdered. So He was crucified between two thieves as an outlaw, a blasphemer, and enemy of God and the Jewish religion. And God gives us such a story to tell to a lost world! Impossible! So the Cross has become the symbol of victory, not of failure; of life, not of death. So the cross now decorates the churches and cathedrals and missions and is even worn as jewelry. Doesn't it seem that God would have given us a great success story to proclaim? He gave us the worst possible message to proclaim: a baby born to an unmarried couple, in a barn, in controversy with his own people, murdered as an outlaw! What a story! And yet millions bow before it! It is told and retold and sung about and written about and painted and preached more than any other event or life known to mankind. And by it we are redeemed.

And is there still more to this impossible story? Yes! The worst yet: He arose from the dead! God raised Him up! He broke open the way for all of us to go to God! Impossible! But that is the Gospel! And that we proclaim. And that becomes the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Would it not seem that God would have given us some great success story to proclaim? Could it not have been verified by great intellectuals and powerful leaders? But no, they rejected it.

And who witnessed and perceived and grasped all of this? Not the "wise". Not the powerful politicians. Not the great religious leaders. Just people! "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. . . ?" (James 2:5). And they tell us that more than 500 people saw Him after He had arisen

from the dead, and they don't even give us the names of very many of them. And who were some of the witnesses who proclaimed it first? Mary Magdalene? The one out of whom he had cast seven devils? And the other Mary? And Peter who denied Him? And a couple people going down the Emmaus road who didn't know Him when He appeared unto them? Surely it would seem that some great scientist or some great historian or some great religious teacher should have been there to verify it. But no. God didn't need that. The event in itself would carry ample power with it to touch the human soul. So now God has armed us with the story of a Virgin Birth, a carpenter, a controversial life, a person murdered as an outlaw, a cross, and a resurrection from the dead—which becomes a victory over death and a salvation and redemption for a lost world! And it has changed the lives of millions upon millions in every nation, language and tongue. And it is still doing so.

But to carry the story of God's call to the impossible a bit further let us consider the people God used to get the message into writing and to what we now call the New Testament. The great religious leaders and intellectuals were offended that they were not called upon to be His disciples or to proclaim His Word. Neither were they needed to write it. For who were they who gave it to us? Matthew the publican. Mark, who had quit outright on his first attempt at a missionary venture. There was Simon Peter who had denied that he knew him. There was the original Saul of Tarsus who hated Him before his conversion. And there was James. Now surely we should have had some great University professor or some famous historian or some widely known philosopher publish this great story. But no. Our writers didn't even have a college education, except Paul. They had no experience in writing. In fact they didn't even have a publisher! Now how can this story get off the ground without a great public relations promoter? This is impossible! But we have their story in more homes and hearts than any other ever written. It is published in more languages, dialects, parts and parcels than any document ever written. Impossible! But this is how God works. This is the God and the Gospel that the unbelievers won't accept, while the evidence of it is so abundant that it practically smothers them.

So here we are with the simplest people carrying the most profound truth while God makes foolish the wisdom of the wisest of men (I Cor. 1:26-31).

So you have heard of some "impossible" Christian? And you know some impossible church? And you know some impossible life that God can't use? Well, that's quite normal. All believers feel as if we are the most impossible of all; but God has called us and is using us, and we love it.



It was ever so that the great gift of faith supercedes all of the impossibles. Have you heard of Noah and an ark? Just impossible, but it saved the human race. Have you heard of Moses who was pitted against an Egyptian government and all of its power to rescue a nation of slaves who had been in captivity for over four centuries? Have you heard of a Daniel in a lion's den or the Hebrew children in a furnace of fire? Have you heard of a David and a Goliath? Did you know about an Isaiah or a Jeremiah, or Amos, or Elijah? All were called to what the world would say was impossible. Have you read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews lately? This is the faith. This is the power. This is where God always did and still does work.

Where is your church working? Or where are you working? *Still in the possibles? Why not get into Faith for a change?* We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). The possibles are for those who live and work only by their own poor human reason. The impossibles are for those who have faith in the God of the impossibles. Be it done unto you according to your FAITH—not your worth, nor your merit, nor your virtue.

God is still calling thousands of young people into this "impossible" but greatest of all lives. Can you by faith join them, or help them? But even greater yet, can you and your church get out of the possibles into the great impossibles where God is always at work?

## THESES (1981-1982)

*We are extremely proud of our students and the research that they pursue. We have asked them to share a short summary of their completed theses at ATS in the hope that others may be made aware of these sources. The theses are bound and in the ATS Library. Those graduates that responded are listed below.*

### **Terry L. Cross, Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Aspects of Revelation: A Comparison of the Views of Karl Barth and Carl F. H. Henry on Propositional Revelation**

Revelation has been shaped into many things by contemporary theology. A major distinction between neo-orthodox theology and evangelical theology is the view that revelation is personal not propositional. The writings of Karl Barth and Carl F. H. Henry form representative material from which to better understand this distinction. Both Barth and Henry rely heavily on their view of God to shape their view of revelation. Barth sees God as the hidden subject who can never fully reveal Himself to man. However, God allows human language and concepts to speak to man, thereby allowing man to know "something" of God. In this way, Barth attempts to avoid skepticism about God. Henry sees God as personal but also rational, and therefore revealing Himself in a rational, written revelation. To dissolve revelation into a subjective, non-cognitive event in which God personally encounters man is to cause the "suicide of theology." The Scriptures are reliable, rational revelation from God and about God, giving man truth, not veiled information or subjectivity.

Casual readers of both Barth and Henry wrongly accuse them of being too personal or too propositional. Barth attempts to bring a cognitive element into his view, but his view of God allows man to know little of truth about God. Henry asserts God reveals Himself personally as well as propositionally, but he fails to emphasize this aspect enough (his chapters on the names of God do not adequately bring this personal aspect to the forefront). In addition, Henry's view of the survival of the rational **imago** is questionable.

It is the thesis of this work that revelation is a divine truth revealed to man which can become the cognitive basis for divine encounter through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. In this way, a balanced approach is achieved without overemphasizing the personal or propositional aspects. Evangelicals want to hold on to a personal God revealing Himself, while at the same time they want to retain cognitive elements in revelation in order to have normative doctrines in theology, ethics, and Christian ministry. The Scriptures provide this cognitive aspect and the Holy Spirit gives a personal aspect through illumination.

### **William J. Dobben, A 'Communications in Marriage Workshop'**

The proliferation of programs of marriage "enrichment" has generated volumes of testimonials and self-reports. Recent studies, however, challenge long-term effectiveness. Basic attitudes about marriage were measured before and after participation in the Communications in Marriage Workshop (CIMW). Inclusion of a control group demonstrated positive movement attributable to the program. Twenty-eight tables are included.

Clergy without graduate training in either education or counseling were "equipped" as facilitators. The CIMW source book (appendix C) provided

nineteen modules including lectures, "guided meditations," worksheets, and a "card sort." Overhead projector transparencies helped to illustrate the lecture modules.

### **Timothy P. Garner and Kerry L. Scott, *A Teaching Resource on Brethren History***

As the title indicates, we have developed a teaching resource relating to Brethren history, as well as focusing on Brethren distinctives past and present. The resource is aimed toward the late Jr. High, early Sr. High age bracket, and is divided into four historical sections. Each section contains a historical overview, class activities, and at least one Bible study. Also included are 25 permanent overheads and scripts for three slide shows. We have outlined the resource into a 13-week elective course, although there is more material than can be adequately covered in that time span.

### **Brad Holtsberry, *Alternatives to the Prison System***

Today, if a man steals your black and white television society ends up paying \$20,000 for his room and board. This foolish waste of money, known as the American prison system, must stop. The cost of imprisonment is staggering. Is this institution the only way to deal with criminals? I am convinced it is not.

In this project I examine various alternatives to the prison system such as: no punishment, capital punishment, restitution, "cutting-off", probation, and halfway houses. For example, the principle of restitution would provide for the victim to receive a new television if his were stolen instead of a \$20,000 tax. There are viable alternatives to the prison system and now is the time to implement them.

### **Peter A. Ishola, *Christian Missions in Yorubaland: 19th-20th Centuries***

The purpose of this thesis is to reflect on the impact of various Christian missions in Yorubaland from 19th-20th centuries. Among the Christian missions in Yorubaland in the 19th-20th centuries are: the Anglican Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States, the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.), and the United Missionary Society (U.M.S.). Each mission tried to emphasize how much it differed from all of the others. Each tried to teach about its denominational differences, but what they had in common was far more impressive because the impact of Christian missionaries on our ways of life has been on the whole positive and beneficial.

Christian missionaries have made a very great contribution to the educational development of the Yoruba people in the post-primary school. In recent years the Christians in government institutions have not been neglected. Their secondary schools have brought prestige to Christian missions. Evangelization through education and educational establishments characterized the early beginnings of Christianity in many parts of Africa. Through the work of Christian missionaries various diseases and ailments have been brought under medical and national control, the health of our people has improved, the infant mortality rate has fallen, and many child-bearing women have continued to receive adequate care. These are just a few of the positive benefits the Christian mission gave to our people. However, it is sad, but very true, that some Christian missionaries have exploited black people in the name of Christianity. Some have treated



Africans as second-class human beings. On the other hand, some missionaries have literally laid down their lives for the black man. In some areas, the early planters of Christianity did **not** seek to enter into the thought world and pattern of the Africans; did not seek to change their religious psychology, their ethos and ethical conceptions and values. And yet, a number of missionaries were convinced of the immense superiority of the Western culture which Africa, as cultural *tabula rasa*, must wholly absorb if it was to be rescued from the claws of paganism and superstitions. Such was the diverse mentality of the early missionaries in Africa who did not penetrate the mind and culture of the Africans. This cultural arrogance and superiority complex "were definitely responsible for the strife between our culture and the Westernized institutions and values," says N.S.S.Iwe. This cultural "superiority" leads Africans to examine their culture. They say, "let us bring back our past." The call for cultural revival is right and necessary, but no culture is static, and no culture is pure.

In fact, every culture has been tainted with sins. My opinion is that it is not only right, but it is appropriate, for Africans to examine their cultural heritage in the light of the jet age and the great upheavals that have come to our continent. Nevertheless, Christianity which has taken root on our continent should also be examined in the light of the Scriptures to see how the sons of Africa can truly be Christian Africans.

#### **Arthur E. Kemp, Toward a Black Theology For Black Evangelicals**

First, Black theology is theology because it is the attempt of Black peoples to reflect on their experience in the world as a people and to see when, where, and how they encountered God, the God of the Holy Bible, intervening in their affairs, their historical experience. It is Christian because it sees faith in the God of the Bible in the Trinitarian expression of the God-head as the very essence of Black Theology. It is the God of the Bible who is with them and for them.

Secondly, Black theology must interpret the Bible in the light of the experience of Black Americans to Black Americans and for Black Americans so that Blacks can see and hear what God is saying to them.

Thirdly, Black Theology must show that the God of the Bible is on the side of the oppressed, liberating them wholistically, and thus they are called to participate with Him in His event of their liberation.

Fourthly, God has historically used violence in the liberation of His peoples, as witnessed by the plagues against Egypt; Joshua at Jericho and Ai (chaps. 6 and 7 of Josh.); David's battles uniting Israel; Christ's cleansing of the Temple (Jn. 2:12-14); and Calvary's crucifixion of Christ by God (Jn. 10:18 with Isa. 53:6 and Eze. 18:4 and 2 Cor. 5:18, 19)—classic Biblical examples of God's wrath at work on behalf of the oppressed, the wretched of the earth (Luke 4:18). Black Theology must point out that violence for the sake of their freedom on the part of Black Americans could very well be interpreted as their Christian participation with God on their behalf. A radical but feasible concept.

Please note in the second statement about who it is that must interpret the Bible. It must be indigenously interpreted by the persons both experiencing the liberating grace of God and needing it, as I posit to be the case with every theology. One group cannot do a theology for another. It must be done in the milieu, culture and experiential frame of reference of the people to whom God would talk. That is the way of the Bible. That is the way God always speaks to His people. Black Theology says that it cannot, it must not, be different for Blacks.



**Marshall J. Pierson, III, Assurance Or Presumption? A Study Of The Meaning Of Defection As Presented In Hebrews 6:4-6**

This study concerned itself with the question of what type of people are in view of the writer of Hebrews at 6:4-6 and in the other passages of the epistle wherein pastoral warnings are uttered against departing from the faith.

The study engaged itself first in word study and exegesis from the Greek text and then surveyed the views from Luther to Wesley in chronological order, including the Arminian-Reformed controversy as it impinged upon Heb. 6:4-6, as well as the contemporary view of "4/5 Arminians" found in many contemporary Baptist circles, their position being essentially that of seventeenth century General Baptists asserting freedom of will of the lost to choose Christ or reject him, but asserting no freedom of will of the regenerate subsequent to conversion so that they are "eternally secure" whether or not they want to be.

My conclusions were that those in view in Heb. 6:4-6 did actually share in the benefits of the Holy Spirit in the same way that Israel in the wilderness received God's benefits even though not all were individually elect. It is my conclusion that the writer of Hebrews consciously employs the covenant motif to the new Israel, the visible church and consciously parallels it with the Old Testament church, Israel, so that the Bible appears to recognize in both testaments two levels of election, one being a corporate body (Israel in the Old Testament, the Christian church since Christ) distinguished from the world in general, and the second level recognizing the election of individuals within the visible church (i.e., that the visible covenant bodies of both testaments are not constituted of only individually elect persons, but is comprised of those who both profess and possess the faith and those who merely profess the faith) and the nonelection of other individuals within the current covenant community, the Christian church.

Thus, those individuals who are truly elect do persevere to the end (cf. John 10:27-30) while those who are merely professors will not, even though they drink from the same spiritual Rock (cf. I Cor. 10:1-12).





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# Ashland Theological Journal

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Editorial Committee:  
David A. Rausch, Editor  
Douglas E. Chismar  
Joseph N. Kickasola

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ISSUE

Our 1983 issue revolves around the "self." In the first article, Professor Theron H. Smith, Director of ATS Extension Programs and instructor in pastoral ministries, considers the problem of narcissism and the blight of the exaggerated "I." He offers concrete suggestions as to how the church should attack this "incalculably harmful" problem. Dr. Douglas E. Chismar, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics, builds upon the foundation laid by Professor Smith. In "The Christian's Appeal to Religious Experience," Dr. Chismar discusses the role of personal testimony "in a culture already beset with narcissism." Dr. Frederick J. Finks, Vice President for the Seminary, enhances the discussion by relating characteristics and approaches that augment ministry and church growth. "Leadership Profile — New Testament Style" elevates the role of the servant-leader, the antithesis of narcissism.

The sermon piece for this issue is provided by Dr. Joseph R. Shultz, President of Ashland College and Seminary. In "The Future of the Church," Dr. Shultz warns against a church representing itself rather than its Lord and offers helpful suggestions to counteract the current trend.

—David A. Rausch, **Editor**

# THE ULTIMATE ENCOUNTER — NARCISSISM AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

by Theron H. Smith

The serious and systematic study of the human mind and personality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has made available a great deal of helpful information on the subject of the self and its expressions. From chapter ten of the first of two volumes by William James and, of course, the writings of Sigmund Freud, to Eric Fromm by way of Heinz Kohut, Alfred Adler, and Carl Jung, there is much accumulated insight available to any serious student who wants to gain a better understanding of the "self". One learns to distinguish between the self as object and the self as process. One comes to see the strategic importance of self-esteem, self-awareness, self-actualization. Yet barely beneath the surface in all of this is a problem of enormous proportions. The "frightful evil of the monstrous ego" was identified as the basic problem of mankind the world over centuries before any of these psychologists and psychiatrists were born.

Twenty-six hundred years ago the Chinese religion/philosophy of Taoism was stressing the basic and essential importance of selflessness, placing a premium on humility and submission. Buddhism has through the centuries set forth its fundamental doctrine of "no-self", and reinforced it by having its people bow and kneel and prostrate themselves. Hinduism has placed the greatest value on the mystic loss of self and provided help along the way with the generous cosmetic use of ashes. Islam has from its beginning addressed its part of the world with a basic message of submission, with no square meter of room for self-glorification, and a programmed reminder of five times a day putting the brow to the ground. Judaism camped much nearer to the danger zone with its distinctly greater individualism, but recognized the danger clearly and described it as the essence of the first "sin" and the one from which all evil evolved. Their people are called to bow, wear a covering over the head, and practice penitence — all of which should serve to pull the "I" back down to proper size. Their ancient Talmud recognizes that the problem begins early: "every child exaggerates its own importance, saying 'the world was created for me'."<sup>1</sup> And long before the Talmud they were identifying "pride" as the root of "wickedness" (Pss. 10, 36, 73). In the Poetic books and in the Prophets, time after time they name this villain and call the people to counter with humility and with the spirit of a servant rather than donning the tragic "crown of pride."



Then Jesus of Nazareth came, born in a barn, raised by a peasant couple. He called all of the people who would follow him to "give up all right to themselves." He informed his followers repeatedly that he was not following his own will. Then he proceeded to absorb insults, physical abuse, lies, betrayal, desertion. Not long after his death a most profound statement was written about him pointing out that "he did not think that equality with God was something to try for, but instead made himself of no reputation and took the role of a servant" (Phil. 2:6-7).

Surveying all of this Karl Menninger wrote that "The goal of all the great historic religions can be summarized as being the overcoming of one's self-love."<sup>2</sup> It is just not true that either chance or collusion causes this convergence of insight from all of these different people and times and places. Here is a great basic problem of human existence — in fact, *the* aboriginal, interminable problem.

The problem, ancient and contemporary, incalculably harmful, is the exaggerated "I", the vanity and self-centeredness that calls seductively and with varying degrees of success to every medical doctor and every military officer, every person that enters the pulpit or stands at the front of the classroom, every athlete and actor, every attorney and policeman, every truck driver and every farmer — everyone. Some form of this attacks the devout and the pagan, the scholar and the illiterate, the affluent and the poverty-stricken, the youngest and the eldest, female and male, ancient and modern, individual and nation. This disease infects the Philippino who warmly indulges his feeling of superiority over the Chinese who are certain of their rank above the Japanese who struggle little at times to hide their glance down on the Koreans. It is the Germans over the English over the Welsh; and of course the Frenchman looks at all of these with the quiet and smug confidence that comes from knowing that he is #1.

While allowing a valid and even essential place for self-respect and self-confidence and self-concern, how powerful is the ancient virus that so easily turns them into a malady. An individual expression of the evil of self-absorption is identified in an interesting line in *Lost Horizon*: "to strive for priority amongst one another — even as on the English playing field — seems entirely barbarous, a sheerly wanton stimulation of all the lower instincts." Unfortunately, all of us are more or less barbarian at times and more than a little stimulated in our "lower instincts." And at the same time this villain is identified in some of the warmest and least barbarian surroundings. Angela Barron McBride, working on her doctorate in developmental psychology at Purdue University, had the temerity to state that the main reason women have children is selfishness. She insists that the potential companionship and pleasure

combine with other personally fulfilling motives to create the self-enhancement that is the key motive for motherhood. Those who would rush to refute this charge may find it difficult, if sincere, to come up with purely altruistic motives for bringing another baby into the world.

But far from the beauty of childbearing and motherhood this demon of self-centeredness and self-indulgence strikes a dastardly blow. A journalist writing about the hideous massacre in Beirut in 1982 accounts for it as coming from "narrow self-interest on the part of the Phalangists who vented their frustration and hate, and the Israelis who permitted and condoned the atrocity." Well that is hardly an original motivation for such large-scale atrocities. Barbara Tuchman describes the excesses of nationalistic egoism that unleashed World War I,<sup>3</sup> and you might well expect to find the same motivation in most of the wars in human history.

From greed and intolerance and envy and lust and gluttony, to war and racism and exploitation and environmental destruction, to drug abuse and crime and marriage failure, the infected and distorted self-interest can ultimately and always be found. And none of us escapes. The spotlight swings across a whole army of us when David Myers asks, "have we not sensed the primacy of selfishness as people spend most of their energies on the personal concerns of themselves and their families, while world famine, tyranny, and nuclear weapons proliferate and world resources are depleted?"<sup>4</sup> All of this adds up to much of the evidence from which Aaron Stern makes this terribly unsettling announcement at opening of *Me: The Narcissistic American*: "No society has ever survived success — the terminal disease for the Roman empire and all the rest, was narcissism. American society is about to join the rest."<sup>5</sup> Speaking from a longer range view Arnold Toynbee reflected on the human situation from the perspective of his years of study and writing on the history of our life on this planet and he observed that "man's fundamental problem is his human egocentricity." While noting some of the accomplishments and advancements brought by science, he pointedly observes that "it has not helped man to break out of the prison of his inborn self-centeredness."<sup>6</sup>

Though it is a recent phenomenon that there have been those like Ayn Rand who have aggressively and skillfully campaigned for assertive individualism and the "virtue of selfishness," still there is evidence that excessive interest in one's own has been a very serious problem during all of the time that there has been human life on earth. This might seem to imply that since nothing can be done to seriously alter that circumstance, we should simply recognize it, accept it, and adjust life to allow for it. But what of the continuing encounter between all of this and the kingdom of God?

The time is right for a contemporary reexamination of this. Paul Vitz, a psychologist at New York University, insists that there is a major historical opportunity for Christianity to provide meaning and life as more and more people discover the emptiness of self-worship.<sup>7</sup>

From the earliest days of the Christian church it is relatively easy to identify the problem of inordinate self-love. It is reportedly the motivation that caused the circumstances resulting in cardiac arrest for both Ananias and Sapphira. In the doctrinal treatise sent to the Roman church, the opening chapter identifies the human problem as "worshipping and serving the creature rather than the creator." It is clearly a concern of major proportions at the opening of the Corinthian correspondence. It was addressed as a serious complication in the life of the Galation church. The people of the Ephesian and Colossian churches are cautioned repeatedly to avoid pride and arrogance. Timothy is advised that the ultimate effect of evil on this planet is that humans will be totally preoccupied with their own selves, utterly self-centered.

Rather than diminishing after the first century A.D., by the middle of the second century this original sin had clearly infected some prominent persons in the Church. Marcion set up his *own* canon and his own church; worse yet, he openly pandered to anti-semitism and pride. Shortly after this star flashed by, the gifted Montanus decided that the "fruit of this tree was desirable." And he had begun so well, identifying some problems which the Church needed to address in order to continue to grow and flourish. But then he began to insist that he was *the* advocate through whom the Holy Spirit would speak. Further he let the people in on the revelation that the Kingdom soon to be set up would have *him* in a very prominent place. The Church only had time enough to forget him when the brilliant preacher/orator, Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, began asking for applause and the waving of handkerchiefs following his speaking. He was able to become rather wealthy by way of his itinerant ministry. There is a considerable amount of evidence that he had an exaggerated interest in his own importance.

But through much of the history of the Church those who have led in the formulation and articulation of Christian doctrine have catalogued narcissism as the original and uniformly fundamental human problem. Augustine declared emphatically that the "primal destruction of man was self-love."<sup>8</sup> He insisted that "pride is the beginning of all sin."<sup>9</sup> Pope Gregory announced that the primary sin and the one from which all others derive is *hubris*.<sup>10</sup>

One of those who grasped the nature and significance of this matter more clearly than others was Martin Luther. Out of his own



personal faith journey he came to see this phenomenon in a clear perspective as it affects most all of us — egocentric religion rather than theocentric. He identifies and sharply condemns Christian thinking, teaching, and practice where our relationship to God depends essentially on us, our perceptions, our needs, our desires, our performance. He had a passion to refute the common thinking that man is the center of everything and that all moves around him. His driving concern was to turn all of us to see that God must be the center. Philip Watson insists that this is the fundamental motif of Luther's thinking and writing.<sup>11</sup>

John Wesley had a strong opinion on this subject. He considered it to be of primary importance. In his Sermon LVII, part 1, section 1, he declared that "self-love is the root, not the branch, of all evil." In an earlier sermon he had asked rhetorically, "where is the man that is born without pride?" He proceeded immediately to warn his hearers that "hereby we rob God of his inalienable right, and idolatrously usurp his glory."<sup>12</sup>

This perception has continued to emerge through the centuries. It is one matter on which there is common agreement by persons of a rather wide spectrum of theological persuasions. Paul Tillich identified hubris, pride, self-elevation, as "sin in its total form."<sup>13</sup> Emil Brunner said that "the origin of sin is the deification [by man], the grasping after the divine right . . ."<sup>14</sup> In his exhaustive study of the Christian idea of love, Anders Nygren makes clear the conclusion that man's greatest need is to be taken out of his "cramping preoccupation with himself," delivered from "the prison of his egocentricity into the glorious liberty of the children of God."<sup>15</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr offers his summary observation: "The Biblical definition of basic sin as pride is an admirable summary of the whole Biblical doctrine of sin."<sup>16</sup> Bishop Aulen stated it just as clearly: "The essence of sin is egocentricity."<sup>17</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his direct and disarming manner left many of us squirming with self-recognition when he related that the hardest thing that he ever had to give up was his self-righteousness. The popular C.S. Lewis calls this the center of Christian morals. Here is the evil that leads to every other vice, says he — the one vice of which no person in the world is free — Pride or Self-Conceit.<sup>18</sup> J.B. Phillips concludes that there is no "sin" we can name which does not spring from love of self; and, the sins which do most damage and cause most suffering are those which have the highest content of self-love.<sup>19</sup>

The world would be well served if the Church would focus a sharp attack on this problem as the twentieth century closes. From generation to generation the Christian pulpit and pew identify, rather slowly, some of the moral ailments that infect their age and



a counter-attack is launched. Human society has benefited immeasurably from this influence as those who pray "thy kingdom come" have moved out to work for its coming. But the time is long overdue for careful attention to be directed to the ultimate struggle. We should dare to join our leader in a deliberate assault on the most widespread, most persistent, and most potent of the ailments that impose suffering and crippling on his world. Narcissism's malignant and relentless curse can be effectively countered by time-proven means.

A new investment of energy and determination must be injected into continuing the efforts to reform and revitalize Christian worship. This is of strategic importance. It rests on the truth in the statement by the late Wm. Temple: "Worship is the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and the chief remedy of our self-centeredness, which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin."<sup>20</sup> There still continues a lot of Christian worship that is not "worthy," and much that appeals to infantile elements in human personality, as Paul Hoon insisted ten years ago.<sup>21</sup> We continue to urgently need a hard reexamination of much of the hymnody in use in all churches, from the cathedral to the store-front church. Intense effort needs to be made in all quarters of the Church to be certain that their corporate worship has an equal balance between the cognitive and the emotive. No less effort should be invested in the recovery of the historic position of the Eucharist in the worship of Christian people, carefully combined with a balanced emphasis on prophetic preaching that follows a comprehensive lectionary. This is no effort to reduce religion to liturgy, but it is a concern to add the mystique and depth with feelings that are desperately needed. One final suggestion in the area of worship: the entire Church should look very carefully at the benefits of Penance being practiced as one of the sacraments. When properly understood and employed, no other single practice has the potential of so effectively holding *ME* to an appropriate size.

A second major component of the response is that all of the Christian Church should turn once again to make a clear and insistent call in teaching and preaching for all persons to make a deep and expensive commitment to their faith. It must be clearly seen that authentic affiliation with his kingdom makes a very large demand on life and lifestyle. At the center of that demand is the self-surrender that William James said has been and always must be regarded as the vital turning point of the religious life.<sup>22</sup> Without disputing over when and how it happens we must all faithfully point to its nature and importance, this moral transaction that carries each one to that higher dimension beyond the purely rational. When this is absent there remains a guaranteed survival of the

subtle and indescribably powerful infected self-motives. But where this self-surrender occurs a crippling blow has been struck at the original sin. The issue addressed here is at the center of this war between narcissism and the Kingdom. It is in a word: *authority*. This is at the heart of the earliest Christian confession: Jesus Christ is Lord. This refers to a particular historical figure and we are committed to discern and respond to the ways of his rule (king) in the midst of all the forces in this world. And there will be countless ways for every woman and man that will measure whether or not they are really in his kingdom. There is a forever continuing relevance in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "costly grace." And our pursuit of that grace must be guided by a greater and growing familiarity with the Scriptures. A companion to our commitment to the lordship of Jesus Christ should be our commitment to the authority of the Holy Scriptures. We do not need any more people petrifying in Bibliolatry, or a greater supply of those skilled at mindlessly spouting proof texts. But all of the world would benefit enormously from a church more Biblically literate, searching with integrity for more truth for our day, and committed in advance to receive and act on their insights.

Let's turn our attention to the ultimate struggle and examine what it *really* means to be in his Kingdom.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Talmud*: Sukkah, 21a

<sup>2</sup>Karl Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?* (NY: Hawthorn, 1973), p. 227.

<sup>3</sup>Barbara Tuchman, *Proud Tower* (NY: Macmillan, 1972).

<sup>4</sup>David Myers, *The Inflated Self* (NY: Seabury Press, 1981), pp. 7, 8.

<sup>5</sup>Aaron Stern, *Me: The Narcissistic American* (NY: Ballantine, 1979), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Arnold Toynbee, *Surviving the Future* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971).

<sup>7</sup>Paul Vitz, *Psychology as Religion* (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* 96.2.

<sup>9</sup>Augustine, Tractate XXV, 15 *On The Gospel of John*.

<sup>10</sup>*Moralia* XXVI, 28.

<sup>11</sup>Philip S. Watson, *Let God Be God* (London: Epworth Press, 1947), p. 38.

<sup>12</sup>John Wesley, Sermon XLIV, part 2, sect. 7.

<sup>13</sup>Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 50.

<sup>14</sup>Emil Brunner, *Die Mystik und Das Wort*, p. 224.

<sup>15</sup>Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, translated by Philip Watson (Phila.: Westminster, 1953).

<sup>16</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (NY: Scribners, 1949), p. 186.

<sup>17</sup>Gustaf Aulen, *The Faith of the Christian Church* (Phila.: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), p. 260.

<sup>18</sup>C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (NY: Macmillan, 1952), p. 94.

<sup>19</sup>J. B. Phillips, *The Newborn Christian* (NY: Macmillan, 1978), p. 49.

<sup>20</sup>William Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel* (NY: Macmillan, 1947), p. 68.

<sup>21</sup>Paul W. Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), p. 94.

<sup>22</sup>William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (NY: Macmillan, 1961).

# THE CHRISTIAN'S APPEAL TO RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

by Douglas E. Chismar

It is odd that in recent years the defenders of Christianity have been so willing to join the secular critics in downplaying the importance of the Christian's experience of God. This seems strange, inasmuch as Paul appealed readily and often to his conversion experience as an argument for the faith (see, for example, Acts 22:1-21). He was also not averse to calling the attention of his readers to their own personal experiences (Gal. 3:2-5).<sup>1</sup> To appeal to one's relationship with Christ seems the most natural place to start when testifying to others about God. Highly sophisticated and abstract philosophical arguments pale when contrasted with the concrete, real-life power of a personal testimony. Why are Christian apologists so concerned to exclude the appeal to religious experience from the domain of Christian apologetics?

The answer to this question is simple: appeals to personal experience are *subjective*.<sup>2</sup> The task of providing objective and valid reasons for accepting claims about God is not furthered by appeal to something which is itself in need of defense. Subjective claims are simply not reliable. To answer the question, "why should I believe in God?" with, "because *I* do!" doesn't take things much farther down the road. In a culture already beset with narcissism, the last thing needed from the believer is more mushy talk about "my personal experiences."

Yet, there surely is a place for communicating to the unbeliever that God still touches individual lives. Before embracing scholasticism for fear of subjectivism, it might do to seek a closer analysis of the problems surrounding the appeal to religious experience. In this article, we will review these alleged difficulties, suggesting that they have been overstated. With Paul, we can proclaim our encounter with the risen Lord, without fear that we are babbling in subjectivistic irrelevance.

Gleaning from the literature devoted to religious experience arguments, it is possible to analyze the charge of "subjectivism" into four distinct objections.<sup>3</sup> There may be other problems with religious experience appeals, but these are the most talked about. The four objections are:

1. The problem of ineffability
2. The problem of verifiability
3. The problem of reliability
4. The problem of alternative interpretations



We will treat each of these objections in turn.

1. *The problem of ineffability.* About twenty years ago, a controversy brewed in the world of British-American philosophy concerning the meaning of religious language. It was argued by some that if God is really the exalted being He is claimed to be by believers, religious language would fall short in trying to describe Him or speak about Him. The prevalence of neo-orthodox "Wholly Other" conceptions of God in these years exacerbated this problem.<sup>4</sup> The controversy has import for appeals to religious experience. If it is impossible to use language to meaningfully speak about God, then it is also impossible to meaningfully testify about one's personal encounter with God. The silenced religious experienter obviously has little to offer qua defender of the faith.

In recent years, this controversy has died down a great deal. With the onset of what was called "ordinary language philosophy" or "linguistic analysis," philosophers came to have a greater appreciation for the flexibility of language. Language was no longer pressed, as it had been in the previous philosophical fad of logical positivism, into a rigid logical or supposedly scientific mold. It is now allowed that within the scope of meaningful human discourse, there are numerous forms of discourse ("language games"), some quite direct and specifiable, others more indirect, metaphorical and meaning-variant. Recent philosophers of religion (e.g., Richard Swinburne) have sought to make a case for the Thomist notion of religious language as "analogous."<sup>5</sup>

When speaking about God, believers may rely upon images and metaphors borrowed from other subject areas: e.g., God as "Father" or Christ as "Redeemer." It is not claimed that God is exactly like these mundane counterparts. Yet these terms are neither empty or meaningless. Some of God's character and actions can be correctly and meaningfully understood as "father-like." That is, God sometimes acts in ways very much like a loving human father.

The objection from ineffability succeeds only if the believer claims to be offering an exhaustive characterization of God's nature by means of ordinary language. Believers who recognize the limitations of their knowledge of God, and of their ability to speak of Him, are not vulnerable to this objection.

Before leaving this area, it is wise to consider other interpretations of the objection. Some might argue that God, in His greatness, is too transcendent to be experienced by a mere human. Claims to religious experience are *a priori* impossible, given the advertised biblical concept of God. There is something to this, of course. Moses was obliged to hide himself in the cleft of a rock, and to view God only after He had passed by. But to suggest that God's

attributes prevent Him from having any contact with His creations is to do Him a philosophical injustice. It is to attribute to Him a sort of "metaphysical obesity" which is not justified by the view of Him given in the Scripture (from which we here are drawing our concept of God). As personal, God has the capacity to refrain from exercising His full potential. He is not an Aristotelian collection of rigid impersonal qualities. Though He has the power to dissolve the earth into its constituent elements in a burst of holy fire, He also has the power — at His personal command — to keep this from occurring when He brings a believer into His presence.

Sometimes the objection from ineffability is made to refer to the spiritual (non-material) nature of God. It can also refer to the mysteriousness or sometimes apparent illogicality of God's ways. Concerning God's spiritual nature, we will have more to say when treating the second objection. As to God's mysterious ways of operating, it is again acknowledged that Christians do not claim to possess a comprehensive knowledge of God or of His ways. Nonetheless, to tell a mystery, one must tell a story. It is one thing to be missing some of the facts; it is another not to know anything at all about God. To appeal to religious experience is to make the relatively limited claim that one knows of God, that He exists, and that certain things are true of His character. This state of limited yet significant acquaintance is no different than that which exists between most people, including even the closest of friends.

2. *The problem of verifiability.* John Wisdom's famous parable of the Invisible Gardener set off a controversy which continued for a number of years.<sup>6</sup> It concerned the question of the public testability of religious claims. How are claims about private, spiritual experience to be tested? To what can the believer point as public evidence, available to all, for the truth of his or her claims? In the years since Wisdom put forth his parable, demands for precise verification have lessened. Philosophers came to realize that in many areas of knowledge, conclusive verification is often impossible for the fundamental axioms and assumptions on which all inquiry rests.<sup>7</sup> Appreciation increased for the way in which structural and systemic factors figure into our evaluation of hypotheses, theories and world-views. Yet the question has still remained: what is it which the Christian apologist is supposed to show in order to fulfill his or her biblical responsibility to provide reasons for belief?

This is an especially crucial issue for appeals to religious experience. When should we believe the individual who claims to have met or heard from God? For several years, philosophers attempted to defend the claim that religious experience is "self-authenticating." For the believer who meets God, nothing could be more sure

and indubitable. He or she *just knows* that God is there. While this is clearly an accurate account of the psychological state of many believers, it does not do justice to the epistemic question which inevitably arises. Religious believers have all too often made mistakes. The mental hospitals are well-populated with religious claimants, many of whom purportedly take their cues to psychotic behavior directly from God Himself. Even the more mentally balanced believer must sometimes ask whether it is God who is directing him or her, or whether it is an all too human impulse. Though some religious experiences are highly self-authenticating or self-convincing from a psychological point of view, the rational individual must always be prepared to ask whether, in fact, things are as they *seem* to be. Could he or she perhaps be deluded?

It is here that the objector to religious experience-claims makes an important mistake. Since religious experience is not epistemically self-authenticating, it must therefore be epistemically worthless. D.G. Attfeld, John Hick and others, however, have argued that this is an overreaction.<sup>8</sup> Attfeld notes an interesting analogy between the perception of ordinary material objects and the religious person's claims to non-sensory phenomenological apprehension of God. He suggests that "the same logical features hold of claims to apprehend God as hold with claims to perceive a material object."<sup>9</sup> In the case of sense-experience, there are three standards commonly appealed to for deciding the question of objectivity. These are (1) "agreement between the data of sight and touch (and the other senses)," (2) "whether what is claimed to be apprehended fits into the structure and normal expectations of a public world of material objects with positions in space and enduring through time," and (3) "whether support from other observers is available in practice or at least in principle."<sup>10</sup> Attfeld argues that similar kinds of standards exist for the religious person, by which veridical experiences may be distinguished from those which are illusory. He writes:

In the spiritual sphere a huge dimension of awareness of God seems to be available comparable to that men have through their senses and indeed partly overlapping with or extending the latter. A coherent, conceptual scheme has in fact evolved to articulate religious experience and to determine how items within it are to be described and interpreted: among and inside the enormous class of occasions of allegedly apprehending God, there are instances where it is necessary to decide on illusion or reality and canons for this appear to have emerged, as they have in the conceptual system that articulates the public world of material objects.<sup>11</sup>

That procedures exist for distinguishing between genuine and illusory religious experiences constitutes an important analogy with perception. Our perceptual experience is usually not, as a



whole, questioned, except by a minority school of philosophers (sceptics) who have unusually high requirements for admissible truth claims. Attfield argues that, in the same way, it is only when epistemic standards are raised to an artificial strictness that *all* religious experience is questioned.

Scepticism in both perception and religion is reasonable in particular cases and procedures exist in both areas to settle disputes. But scepticism about whole dimensions of apprehension, it may be argued, is radically different and may belong to that special kind of doubt only philosophers have. Corresponding to normal human confidence in perception it may be reasonable to claim that there is a conviction religious men have as part of *their* commonsense, that *their* experience is in general veridical and that they only need to reconsider their stance if weighty and irrefutable arguments can be brought against it.<sup>12</sup>

Questioning whether or not these "weighty and irrefutable arguments" against theism exist, leads one, unfortunately, to the notorious and unsettleable question of who carries the "burden of proof." For my part, I am inclined to doubt whether such arguments in fact exist. The closest candidates are those *reductio ad absurdum* arguments which seek to demonstrate an incoherence in the Christian system (e.g., due to the problem of evil). Such arguments require that Christian foundational premises first be accepted. Even if they succeed, they would thus fail to justify an *initial* scepticism about the whole of religious experience.

All this is to show that the criteria for verification of religious experience are extremely difficult to specify. Just as it is hard to imagine what would constitute criteria for the verification of the whole of sense-experience, so also it is difficult to imagine how the entire domain of spiritual experiencing could be tested. We will note one attempt at this when treating the third objection. Meanwhile, we must question whether the call for verification can be specified adequately such that clear criteria are assigned which do justice to the unique nature of religious experience.

3. *The problem of reliability.* There is an empirical approach to testing religious experience that appears most prominently in Sigmund Freud's *The Future of an Illusion*.<sup>13</sup> This consists of the attempt to provide a naturalistic counter-explanation for a claimed religious experience. If it can be shown that what an individual thought to be the experience of God can be interpreted in a wholly non-supernatural way — e.g., as a psychological aberration — then the individual's appeal to another dimension is rendered unnecessary. A wholly this-worldly explanation is adequate. This approach is particularly powerful if it can be shown that, empirically speaking, the naturalistic phenomena described are of a kind that are often correlated with false belief-behavior on the part of the



individual making the claim. Thus Keith Yandell summarizes Freud's objection to religious experiences:

1. Obsessional neuroses are characterized by certain factors (say, a, b, c, d, e, f) and the beliefs that accompany neuroses are known to be almost always false.
2. Religious conviction is characterized by certain factors which are very similar, if not identical, to a-f, and is accompanied by certain beliefs.

So:

3. The beliefs which accompany religious conviction are very likely false.<sup>14</sup>

In this context, we will note just two of the difficulties. First, as Yandell points out, the fact that a belief is associated with certain personal or psychological characteristics in the believer does not *guarantee*, or even necessarily make it probable, that the belief itself is false.<sup>15</sup> Hosts of people hold beliefs for the strangest and most inadequate reasons. This may make such people unreliable as intellectual authorities, but it does not imply that any particular belief or set of beliefs is false. In order to avoid committing the genetic fallacy, the objector must show that the individual's belief is clearly the causal result of the psychological aberrations which characterize him or her, *and* that the belief is not supported by any other evidential claims. Even then, the person's belief, say, that there is a God, may be true, though the person has turned out to believe it for inadequate reasons.

A second point is even more crucial. Has anyone successfully demonstrated that religious belief is characterized by (a)-(f)? Certainly, some correlations are observed. As noted above, the religious have done a rather effective job of infiltrating the mental hospitals. Some Christian groups studied by psychologists of religion have scored rather badly on personality profiles, suggesting that their religious fervor may be the result of non-religious unresolved internal conflicts.<sup>16</sup> And there is Freud's argument that religious people are only seeking wish fulfillment — an argument which unfortunately stigmatizes anyone who achieves satisfaction of fulfillment through their belief-system. Charging these individuals with wish fulfillment works, however, only if it can be shown that this is the single reason these individuals are happy. Freud's arguments in *The Future of an Illusion* fail strikingly in this department.<sup>17</sup>

Granting that some, perhaps many, religious people are characterized in ways which suspiciously resemble judgment-aberrating psychological syndromes, it remains to be seen whether *all* religious people are so characterized.<sup>18</sup> Here the objection begins to break down. Psychologists of religion, like all human spectators, tend to pick out the most fanatical, boisterous, and unusual groups for

study. Often it is the constituency of these individuals in mental institutions which spurs the study of their etiology and habits.<sup>19</sup> Mystics making some of the more extreme claims about their experience are also of perpetual interest. Yet many of these individuals have been the most alienated from society, and some bordered on heresy in their beliefs. What of the mass of relatively normal, uninteresting religious people who claim a daily "walk with God," making slow and gradual progress at self-acceptance, personal integration and improved relationships with others? It is sheer dogmatism to claim that such individuals do not exist. Because of their basically unexciting character (and hence anonymity), they may exist in numbers which far exceed anyone's expectation.

The fact of the existence of this latter group endangers the kind of argument put forward as objection #3. This is particularly so if one considers an oft-overlooked characteristic of Christianity — viz., the randomness of conversion experiences. Christian converts can be discovered from all different economic and social backgrounds. Psychological histories vary: some choose to believe following a tragic life or particular trauma, while others come to a rather non-climactic realization that God has been a real force in their lives. Naturalistic objections to religious experience depend upon correlations with specifiable psychological syndromes, which themselves involve a unified causal story accounting for the appearance of the syndrome in individuals. Randomness wreaks havoc upon such counter-explanations by preventing the establishment of the necessary generalizations based on psycho-history, economic and social backgrounds, etc. Again, some religious groups and forms of religious behavior may lend themselves easily to such generalizations. We argue here, however, that when the Christian populace is considered on the basis of a wide sample, sufficient randomness exists to prevent the successful construction of naturalistic counter-explanations.

In fact, the naturalistic type of objection can be turned around to produce a positive argument for the validity of some religious experiences. Just as lack of reliability may constitute an empirical means of falsifying claims to religious experience, so established credibility may serve the cause of empirical verification of religious claims. Yandell's argument schema might be rewritten as follows:

1. Well-integrated or self-actualizing persons are characterized by certain factors (a, b, c, d, e, f) and the beliefs held by such individuals tend to be reasoned-through, reality-based and credible.
2. Religious conviction is characterized by certain factors which are very similar, if not identical, to a-f, and is accompanied by certain beliefs.

So:

3. The beliefs which accompany religious conviction are very likely reasoned-out, reality-based and credible.<sup>20</sup>

This argument must be received with the same qualifications which were made upon Yandell's formulation of Freud's argument. Note that the argument has a familiar ring. It appears in Jesus's exhortation that "ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16). Paul makes a similar appeal to personal credibility in II Corinthians:

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ (II Cor. 2:15-17, RSV).<sup>21</sup>

There is something valid about judging a person's religious testimony at least in part by his or her observed lifestyle. Thus the objection from naturalistic counter-explanations suggests what may be the closest thing to an empirical verification of religious experience-claims.

4. *The problem of alternative interpretations.* A final objection to the appeal to experience, commonly noted in the literature, is the variety of interpretations of religious experience. If we look to experience-claims for truth, then how do we decide whom to believe? The Hindu claims one kind of experience, the Zen Buddhist another kind, the Christian another. Vital to untangling this knot is deciding what our attitude is to be toward other religions. For example, as a Christian one might take one of three postures toward other religions.

1. Proponents of other religions are completely deluded — they actually experience nothing at all
2. Proponents of other religions are partially correct — they experience aspects of reality
3. Proponents of other religions are completely correct — they experience God, but in a different way

Immediate problems arise if we choose either the first or last posture. It is difficult to argue that representatives of other religious traditions are experiencing nothing at all. This would fail to account for the lasting contributions which those traditions have made to human understanding. On the other hand, to regard them as experiencing the same God, but in different ways is to overlook the quite radical differences of belief between the major religions. Holding the law of non-contradiction in public scorn, some try to hold onto all competing interpretations at the same time. The price is either philosophical absurdity or the covert reintroduction of some one concept of God, to the detriment of the variety of insights of all the other contributors.



The second posture is most preferable. It does not force an identification of the object of experience of alternative religious traditions with the Christian God. It also allows that individuals in these other traditions experience *something*, though not the Christian God. Some may take a derogatory view of these experiences (they are experiences of the demonic); others of a more ecumenical stripe may ascribe value to these experiences. It is not our intention to take a stand on the question of evaluation in this context.

If we take the second posture, the problem of alternative interpretations disappears. Insofar as individuals of differing religious traditions experience different objects, they do not disagree with each other. Their experience claims do not constitute alternative interpretations of the same object, but rather differing experiences, with accompanying interpretations, of alternative aspects of reality. The appearance of alternative interpretations of *one* object arises from a constricted semantics. Despite the considerable variety of possible "religious" experiences, a fairly limited vocabulary of religious terms is forced to do everyone's interpretative service. The result is that very different kinds of experiences, similar perhaps only in a limited respect, are given the same descriptive names.

A different case is that of individuals of the same religious tradition who make contradictory or differing claims. For example, there were the Münsterites, who claimed that God had called them to a medieval form of communism, or the Montanists, who expected Christ to appear in second century Asia Minor. Obviously, these individuals, who identified themselves with the Christian tradition, were getting very different signals from God than were their peers. Where this is the case, appeal must be made to the tests available within the relevant tradition. In this case the appeal to Scripture and the examination of lifestyles would be appropriate tests.

It is now time to sum up our discussion. Religious experience is not wholly self-authenticating. There is always some question as to whether another person, or even one's self, has veridically experienced God or correctly heard His voice. But this does not imply that religious experience is wholly illusory or unimportant. The objections which we have considered fail to show that all cases of religious experience are either non-veridical or untestable. Our discussion has suggested that where religious experience-claims are at issue, the credibility of the individual represents an important qualifying or disqualifying feature. Where an individual, to all appearances, is a rational, well-adjusted and psychologically-integrated person, his or her claim to religious experience deserves a hearing. There is no reason to *a priori* disqualify the individual's



testimony, anymore than we would disqualify the verdict of sense-experience as to the existence and character of everyday material objects, simply because we sometimes make mistakes in identification.

Appeals to religious experience are legitimate in the field of Christian apologetics; they deserve a hearing, provided some means of establishing credibility is also present at hand. Where a religious witness makes a brute claim to the experience of God with no accompanying demonstration of his or her credibility, it is wrong to expect others to accept the subject's claims *carte blanche*. We are thus brought back to the early Christian model of a *lived* testimony to Christ's resurrection power. Even more, we are challenged to transform the present-day Church into a model and exhibition which lends credence to the claims we make about our private lives with God. As a requirement for the successful appeal to religious experience we are hence called to the urgent tasks of personal sanctification and corporate reformation.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See B. B. Warfield, "Paul's Argument from Experience," in *Selected Shorter Writings*, edited by John E. Meeter, Volume 2 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 142-51.

<sup>2</sup>E.g., John W. Montgomery, "Constructive Religious Empiricism: An Analysis and Criticism," in *The Shape of the Past* (Edwards, 1962), 257-311.

<sup>3</sup>Some representative discussions are: D. G. Attfeld, "The Argument from Religious Experience," *Religious Studies* 11 (1975): 335-43; Sidney Hook, *Religious Experience and Truth* (New York University Press, 1961); H. J. N. Horsburgh, "The Claims of Religious Experience," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 335 (1975): 186-200; H. D. Lewis, *Our Experience of God* (N.Y.: MacMillan, 1959); Eugene Thomas Long, "Experience and the Justification of Religious Belief," *Religious Studies* 17 (1981): 499-510; C. B. Martin, *Religious Belief* (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1959); George I. Mavrodes, *Belief in God* (N.Y.: Random House, 1970); Robert A. Oakes, "Religious Experience and Rational Certainty," *Religious Studies* 12 (1976): 311-18; Keith E. Yandell, *Basic Issues in the Philosophy of Religion* (Allyn & Bacon, 1976).

<sup>4</sup>See Lawrence C. Becker, "A Note on Religious Experience Arguments," *Religious Studies* 7 (1971): 63-68.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), see 50-84.

<sup>6</sup>John Wisdom, "Gods" in *Logic and Language*, edited by Antony Flew (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1951). See also Antony Flew, R. M. Hare, Basil Mitchell, "Theology and Falsification," in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, edited by Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (London: SCM

Press, 1955), 96-105. In the parable of the Invisible Gardener, an investigator asks how he can hope to verify the existence of the gardener, who is "invisible, intangible, (and) eternally elusive."

<sup>7</sup>For a review, with reference to theology, see Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1974).

<sup>8</sup>D. G. Attfield, op. cit.; John Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God* (N.Y.: Herder & Herder, 1971), see esp. the last chapter.

<sup>9</sup>Attfield, 335.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1976 ed.).

<sup>14</sup>Yandell, op. cit., 121.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 121-23.

<sup>16</sup>A useful overview of studies is James E. Dittes, "Psychology of Religion," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. by Gardner Lindzey, Elliot Aronson, Volume 5: *Applied Social Psychology* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969 ed.), 602-59.

<sup>17</sup>See Hans Kung, *Freud and the Problem of God*, trans. by Edward Quinn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

<sup>18</sup>See Michael Argyle, *Religious Behavior* (Glencoe, Ill.: Glencoe, 1959).

<sup>19</sup>An exception to this pattern is the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, which has published studies of a broad cross-section of the religious world in a variety of contexts.

<sup>20</sup>A positive view of this kind is found in Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1976 ed.). See also the recently evolved genre of books concerned with religious development and psychological health: e.g., James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

<sup>21</sup>See also II Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 1; I Thess. 1:5; 2:3-12.

## LEADERSHIP PROFILE — NEW TESTAMENT STYLE

by Frederick J. Finks

What are the necessary qualities that enable some pastors to grow large and healthy congregations while others struggle along in failing pastorates barely able to meet the pastor's salary and pay the electric bill? It is my belief that the old adage "Leaders are born, not made," is totally erroneous. Let me state at the outset to avoid any misunderstanding that there is no magical scheme that will transform overnight an ordinary pastor into a "Super Church-Growth Giant," nor are there any phone-booth secrets where a quick change artist can emerge as a caped crusader for God, ready to right all the wrongs of the world. There are likewise both pastors and churches that can not and will not grow — some because of location and disease, others because they are not willing to pay the price involved in growth. I do believe, however, that there are certain characteristics that can be adapted by any pastor who is serious about growth. Each pastor will need to make adjustments and corrections depending upon his own personality and make-up.

Harold J. Fickett asserts, "There are three requirements for a good program within the church. The first is leadership, the second is leadership, and the third is leadership."<sup>1</sup>

Leadership is crucial and there is no way to deny its importance. Take any group of two or more and observe the interaction. Someone will assume the leadership position if no one is appointed and will become the recognized leader of the group.

In many churches across America today there is a lack of effective leadership. The result, and in many cases the primary reason for ineffective leadership, is "in-house" struggles. The pastor, the deacon board, the trustees, etc., are all seeking power positions. In healthy churches, leadership has been earned and the respect for authority has become accepted. "In America, the primary catalytic factor for growth in a local church is the pastor."<sup>2</sup> "There is no substitute for dynamic, aggressive, positive, inspiring leadership! Almost without exception, the lack of success means the lack of effective leadership."<sup>3</sup>

This is not to say that the pastor is the only key to a growing church. In fact, quite the opposite is true. But he is vitally important and considered to be the single most important factor. There are certain characteristics and approaches in ministry that support the foundation for growth and enhance the leadership ability of

pastors. These areas include spiritual renewal, spiritual gifts, and leadership style.

## **Spiritually Renewed**

Many pastors today would readily admit that they have often felt unworthy to be involved in ministry. "It is normal for the pastor of a growing church to deny that he is a primary key to growth. For one thing, this is due to sincere Christian humility. These pastors are men of God."<sup>4</sup> God, for some unknown reason, has entrusted mankind with all its weaknesses and imperfections to carry forth the perfect plan of God. It was with Peter's simple statement "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"<sup>5</sup> that Jesus said he would build His church and not even the gates of hell could overpower it.

Thus God continues to look for people to lead His church — people who will be renewed and committed to the ongoing proclamation of His Word. It is crucial that these leaders be in tune with God. Failure to do so invites disaster. The task of ministry is so unlike any other occupation known to man. . .

We dare not measure spiritual success by worldly standards. What is a successful ministry? In other vocations, the success of a man is usually measured in terms of the visible results which he is able to produce, the esteem in which he is held by his colleagues, the salary which his services are able to command. In spiritual ministry, we dare not apply the usual formula. It is not what my colleagues think of me that counts, but what does God think of me? . . . Basically and ultimately, there is only one criterion of success. Am I fulfilling the will of God in my life?<sup>6</sup>

Spiritual renewal is therefore one of the most important characteristics of the spiritual qualifications necessary for ministry. The dangers that face the pastor who is out of tune with God will result in failure and frustration.

J.I. Packer presents a three-phased approach to bring renewal and a growing relationship with God.

First, knowing God is a matter of personal dealing, as is all direct acquaintance with personal beings. Knowing God is more than knowing about Him; it is a matter of dealing with Him as He opens up to you, and being dealt with by Him as He takes knowledge of you. . . .

Second, knowing God is a matter of personal involvement, in mind, will and feeling. It would not, indeed, be a fully personal relationship otherwise. To get to know another person, you have to commit yourself with his concerns. . . .

Then, third, knowing God is a matter of grace. It is a relationship in which the initiative throughout is with God as it must be, since God is so completely above us and we have so completely forfeited



all claim on His favour by our sins. We do not make friends with God; God makes friends with us, bringing us to know Him by making His love known to us.<sup>7</sup>

Personal renewal comes by opening up oneself before the Living God and by making a commitment for a personal encounter with God to discover His will, His direction, and His leadership for ministry. It is not a one-shot encounter. It is a constant, everyday involvement. Spiritual renewal offers both encouragement and a renewed sense of worth. Effective leadership is spiritual leadership. It is not going it alone. It is not trusting in human knowledge, personality, gifts or abilities, rather it is trusting in God, being led by Him, receiving His gifts and incorporating them into the Church with God's blessing.

### Spiritual Gifts

A second characteristic of the successful pastor centers around the concept of spiritual gifts. What exactly is a spiritual gift? "A spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ according to God's grace for use within the context of the Body."<sup>8</sup>

Briefly, spiritual gifts are characteristics enhanced by the direction of God, given to all believers for the uplifting and unifying of the church. Spiritual gifts are not given for self-glorification, nor for individual use apart from the body. They are given to support the body, to make it more rounded. Individual spiritual gifts complement one another as they are practiced corporately. Spiritual gifts are important if the church is to be equipped for effective ministry.

The use of spiritual gifts has often been severely limited. No doubt the main reason lies in the failure of the church to teach persons about spiritual gifts. Another reason lies with each Christian's failure to search out his own particular gifts.

The largest accounting of spiritual gifts is found in Paul's letters: Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. For this study on leadership, the passage that best applies is that of Ephesians 4: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."<sup>9</sup>

The *apostles* were recognized by the early church as those who had been with Christ and, as such, were his representatives commanding authority. They possessed the Spirit of God in that they performed signs and wonders, were responsible for healing, and spoke boldly of the resurrection of Christ. They were responsible

for spreading out from Jerusalem with the gospel, for beginning new churches, and for choosing men to do the work of ministry.

The *evangelists* were those who proclaimed Christ's message to those who would hear and become disciples. Philip, an apostle, was instructed by an angel of the Lord to go to a desert road in Gaza. Here Philip encountered the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading from the scroll of Isaiah. Philip preached unto him the words of Christ, whereupon the Ethiopian requested baptism. Following this, "Philip found himself in Azotus; and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities, until he came to Caesarea."<sup>10</sup>

The *pastor*, or *pastor-teacher* as some refer to him, is one who is directly responsible for the care and shepherding of a body of believers. The pastor has two main responsibilities: guarding himself lest he fall into sin and shepherding the flock.

These gifts of leadership mentioned in Ephesians 4 were given ". . . for the equipping of the saints for the work of service." This meant that the apostles were to be responsible for training others to lead. Effective leadership was shared leadership where other believers were given the responsibility, along with the apostles, to participate in the work and ministry of the church.

As seen through this very limited search of the Scriptures, leadership in the early Church was placed in the hands of spiritually capable men who possessed spiritual gifts of leadership.

Today there is still a need for spiritually endowed leaders to take charge of God's work within the church. The scriptural mandate of Timothy and Titus with qualifications for elders (leaders) above repute, is still mandatory today. To ask for, or to accept anything less, will not do. If the church is to grow, quality must be invested in leadership.

It would be well if each present-day denomination and each local church would take this list and lay it alongside a list of the leaders prescribed by the church's official organizational structure and, before God, make a comparison. Are the lists comparable at all? How does the church actually function compared with what the Word of God says?<sup>11</sup>

It is important to note that there is no one form of church organization to be found in the New Testament. However, the one concept that is found in every system is spiritual leadership. Howard A. Snyder says of such leadership, "All leadership in the church, therefore, is based on spiritual gifts."<sup>12</sup>

Lloyd Perry has a good description of an effective pastor:

An evangelical pastor is expected to be an informed man, thoughtful, apt in independent investigation, and well oriented in respect to all truth. He is to be a man of integrity, truthful, honest, self-

controlled, and morally pure. He is to be a man who is emotionally mature. He should be gracious, cheerful, positive, and cultured.

As a Christian, he should be committed to Christ, sensitive to the Spirit of God, and faithful in using the means of grace. He must be rooted in biblical truth, conscious of his position within historical Christianity, aware of his responsibility to the whole Christian community, and constant in his witnessing for Jesus Christ.

As a servant of Christ in the church, he ought to be oriented sympathetically toward the problems of his contemporaries and be alert to ways in which God's Word may be applied in specific concrete situations. He must be able to communicate the Gospel effectively. He should be able to provide challenging leadership. There should be a positive relationship maintained with the denomination in which he labors, and he should be appreciative of the traditions and contributions of other denominations.

An effective pastor is a very important factor in getting a church on target. He should be God's man in God's place in God's time.<sup>13</sup>

If the pastor is to be successful in his calling, he must become an expert in his field. A brain surgeon dare not fly by the seat of his pants unless he wants to lose (literally) his constituents. Likewise, the pastor must prepare himself to be the most effective leader according to his God-given abilities. This involves recognizing personal gifts and learning to use them to their highest potential.

Many pastors also fear what spiritual gifts may do to the church. There is justification for this feeling since the use of certain spiritual gifts can cause division when used improperly. There are biblical guidelines for using spiritual gifts. As has been previously pointed to, spiritual gifts are given to Christians for the common good. The three main passages on spiritual gifts all give reference to this:

... for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.<sup>15</sup>

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.<sup>16</sup>

Spiritual gifts are for the body. Any exercise of spiritual gifts other than in and for the body is non-biblical and detrimental to the whole body as well as the individual.

Spiritual gifts are God's way of blessing the church through the Holy Spirit. He equips the church for ministry. His spirit fills and renews the person, giving the full awareness that God is in control and bringing all things together in unity. Discovery and utilization of these God given gifts are important to the success and health of a growing church.



## Servant Leadership

The third characteristic of a successful pastor deals more with the style of ministry. There are many styles and patterns for ministry, but my personal feeling is that one particular style outweighs all the rest and is most closely aligned with my own theological position. That style has become commonly known as the Servant-Leader.

In the thirteenth chapter of John, Jesus presents a beautiful example of the servant-leader by washing the feet of His disciples:

You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.<sup>17</sup>

Lawrence O. Richard in *A New Face for the Church* devotes a chapter on "Leadership in the Church," in which he states several important facets of the servant-leader:

. . . scriptural leadership requires the leader to be completely open in his relationship with others, and that he become deeply involved in their lives. . . . The ability of a leader to help and guide others never rests on his own accomplishment or perfection. . . . The servant-leader must share himself and give himself in his ministry to the church. Nor is there room for impersonal leadership, that withdraws from depth relationship with others in the body.<sup>18</sup>

There is indeed a pattern of leadership and authority that exists within the context of New Testament Christianity as presented by Jesus that reflects a dramatic change from that of normal human relationships.

Where the disciples argued about priority and place of prominence, Jesus responded,

You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slaves of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.<sup>19</sup>

It would do well for pastors to adopt these principles expressed by Jesus as relevant to the authority in the church today. All too often there seems to be a struggle for leadership. In too many cases, the pastor is drawn up on one side and the congregation or deacon board on the other. There is some misconception that the two are natural enemies. Some congregations develop the misunderstand-



ing that since they have homesteaded this church, no one (including the pastor) can change things without their approval. And thus they are locked into battle, dueling to the death or at least as long as it takes them to run the pastor out of town.

Likewise, some pastors act as if they are the means of salvation to their newly inherited charge. Whereas other pastors failed miserably in moving the congregation off dead center, such would not be the case this time. No matter what it takes, no matter what the cost, this time change will come even if it means driving some families away or splitting the church.

The above two scenarios unfortunately have been acted out all too many times in congregations across the country. It is a classic case of humanistic leadership versus servant-leadership.

Servant-leadership requires a completely open and honest relationship between all parties. There are no hidden agendas or power plays going on behind the others back. Servant-leadership requires forgiveness and healing.

An experience in my early years as a pastor almost caused irreparable damage to my church, some individuals, and myself. It was over an incident that was quite small, but because of a misunderstanding it had grown into gigantic proportions seeking to devour everyone. After that unnerving experience our church began to practice a kind of caring and openness that continued through my entire pastorate there.

Our Board of Directors and myself covenanted together to deal swiftly and honestly with every problem no matter how small. Whenever gossip surfaced, the truth was investigated by talking to those involved. When someone expressed concern or alarm over a given situation, they received a pastoral call to deal with it immediately.

New families who began attending our church were informed of our concern for every individual and their problems. If they thought something was amiss they were to feel free to bring it to our attention. It soon became apparent to everyone that we indeed cared about their feelings and would work together in solving any problem openly and honestly.

Now I would be naive to think that we were able to please everyone and wrong to suppose that every problem was solved before someone had hurt feelings, but I am convinced that we made a tremendous impact on more lives than not. People felt comfortable to disagree without becoming angry or resorting to threats. Modeling of servant-leadership on the part of the pastoral staff and Board of Directors found its way into the hearts and lives of the people.

So it is with leadership today. Pastors who are willing to pay the price will see results. It takes no magic combination of personal

traits, but a Godly willingness to follow Christ's model. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant. . . He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."<sup>20</sup>

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."<sup>21</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Harold L. Fickett, *Hope for Your Church: Ten Principles of Church Growth* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), p. 83.

<sup>2</sup>C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Glendale: Regal Books, 1976), p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Schuller, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities* (Glendale: Regal Books, 1974), p. 48.

<sup>4</sup>Wagner, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>5</sup>Matthew 16:16 (NAS).

<sup>6</sup>Melvin Hodges, *Grow Toward Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), p. 8.

<sup>7</sup>J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), pp. 34-36.

<sup>8</sup>C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Glendale: Regal Books, 1978), p. 42.

<sup>9</sup>Ephesians 4:11-12 (NAS).

<sup>10</sup>Acts 8:40 (NAS).

<sup>11</sup>Howard A. Snyder, *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), p. 94.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>13</sup>Lloyd Perry, *Getting the Church on Target* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), pp. 10-11.

<sup>14</sup>Eph. 4:12 (NAS).

<sup>15</sup>Rom. 12:4-5 (NAS).

<sup>16</sup>I Cor. 12:7 (NAS).

<sup>17</sup>John 13:13-17 (NAS).

<sup>18</sup>Lawrence O. Richards, *A New Face for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), pp. 114-15.

<sup>19</sup>Mark 10:42-45 (NAS).

<sup>20</sup>Philippians 2:5-8 (NAS).

<sup>21</sup>John 13:17 (NAS).

# THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

by Joseph R. Shultz

*Ecclesiology and the Future of the Church.* The future of the Church is directly related to the strength of the teaching of the doctrine of Christ.

The Lord of the church, Jesus Christ, is the only basis of the true church. The "establishment" of the church is not in its organization or historic manifestation but in its Lord. The power of the church is not in its membership, but its Master. The resurrected Christ — at the right hand of God — is the only "establishment." The Lord of the church came "to give His life a ransom for many," and "who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8).

The Church does not try to glorify itself but seeks to subordinate itself to its witness, placing itself without any reservation in the service and under the control of that which is the Lord's. However, it seems that the characteristic temptation and trend of the church is in representing itself rather than the justification-sanctification which has taken place in Jesus Christ. An analysis of our time might well reveal that in no era since the Reformation has the evangelical church endangered its witness with the image of "establishment," even to the mitigation of the truth that its existence is only valid as it points beyond itself and to the living Christ. Never before has the church had so many vested interests which it guards often under the guise of tradition and sacred doctrine.

The teaching of the Christological doctrine as foundational to ecclesiology precludes establishment and predicates the provisional nature of the church. The church is always moving toward the *eschaton*. Certainly the basic interpretation of Eph. 4:11-15 is that the very vocations in the church — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers — are established for its provisional nature, "till we all come." It is provisional because it has not yet attained final achievement, nor will it ever do so. The church, like the apostle Paul, must say, "I count not myself till apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14).

The church is always a movement, — a movement with a goal —

established in the person and work of Christ. The movement continues in history and becomes universal insofar as its conclusion is the glory of its Lord. We must resist the semblance of a church whose primary aim is self-glorification. In history the "movement" of the church has displayed inherent power to challenge both those within and without its membership.

The church is the provisional "today" in the eternal truth — "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). The provisional representation of today is validated only as it is related to the "yesterday" and the "forever" of Christ. For the Christian this is the point of reference which gives meaning to both history and time. Because of the church's stance in time, its "fitting" is always made relevant by its Lord. In other words, the methods of the movement of the church are always made applicable by the representation of Christ in time. In this sense the church is never completely fitted (*Katapti ov* - a perfectly adjusted adaptation)<sup>1</sup> for its task, but is always being fitted by the quickening power of his Holy Spirit. The dynamic of the Spirit must bring relevance to the methods of the movement of the church, if there is going to be relevance.

*Edification and the Future of the Church.* What is the meaning of the New Testament term "edification" as applied to the church? In the Septuagint the word *oikodomai* appears 17 times. In St. Paul's epistles *oikodoma* occurs 14 times. Of course we know that the basic meaning of the term is "the act of building." The term *oikodemos* is a builder, an architect. The derived term *oikodomia* is a building of a house. Earlier usage of the term *oikodoma* was as an abstract noun, but in time the noun had a tendency to become concrete and is found here in a rather transitional sense. Paul's usage of the term in relation to the church caused its meaning to become "edification."<sup>2</sup>

God is the builder of the church. Christ declares, "I will build my church. . . ." (Matt. 16:18). The passage in II Corinthians 5:1 is very interesting in this topical context: (*Oikodoman ek theou echomen, oikian acheiropoiaton*) "A building proceeding from God as builder." The direction of action and the power of operation is strongly felt in the first part of the passage, then the result of the operation is afterwards expressed. God, the architect of heaven and earth, is also the architect of the church upon the earth in time. He is not only at the cornerstone in His son Jesus Christ, but He also remains as the one providing the elements of the building and the one setting them in their proper place. He is not one who simply puts up His sign on the job and then becomes an absentee foreman, but one who remains active day and night in heaven and in earth concerning his community of faithful (cf. Psalm 139). It is God in



Christ through the Holy Spirit who concretely directs the activity and determines the actions of men in this work of building and growing in Himself. The Christian community is what it is in as much as He is present, speaking and acting as the chief architect.

Thus, what is commonly described as "edification" is more essentially the sanctifying work of God in the Christian community. Edification is the process of both proclamation and the progressive results of that proclamation. The adoration of God in Christ through the Gospel is basic to the building and growing of the *ecclesia*. This interpretation and emphasis brings greater correlation between the New Testament terms building, body, and temple. This basic interpretation, however, must be guarded from becoming centered anthropologically rather than christologically. In other words, in an ultimate sense Christ is the author and the finisher of the edifying process of the church and man enters into the process by praise, prayer, and worship.

In ordinary construction and growth there are usually finished works; however, in the Christian community there is always a progressive movement upon that which is already established. In the church there is no such thing as a finished task. Every work and activity in a sense is a repetition of that already taken place and that which is to come. The Christian community looks for and waits upon the completed edifice which will be consummated only in the eschaton.

*Evangelism and the Future of the Church.* The evangelism of the church is not just predicated upon an historic distant command, but by a present distinct work of grace going on in the world through the Holy Spirit. Of the many scriptural passages which could be cited, II Corinthians 5:17-20 is selected:

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we beg you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

In this great passage we are met with the singular truth that *we* enter into the work of *Christ*. We do not initiate or control evangelism, nor are we the continuance of the incarnation of Christ, but simply participants in the ministry of the reconciliation of God in Christ. In the earlier verses of this section we learn that repentance, faith, regeneration, new creation, is due to what God has done for us. Paul describes the process in saying, "God recon-

ciled us to Himself through Christ," which in fact brings us to the point of genuine evangelism.

God effected our reconciliation, which by its essence makes us ambassadors of reconciliation. The present participles, "engaged in reconciling to himself," "engaged in not reckoning to them their transgressions," reveal that God is busy transforming enemies into friends. This work of God is occurring. It is now in process and is the basis of Christian evangelism.

The last part of the 19th verse transfers the work of the ministry of Christian evangelism from Christ to the Christian: ". . . and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." The present participle in the first part of the verse gives way to an aorist: "hath deposited it in our charge." This true evangelism has been placed into our hands by God, God is doing this wonderous work, through His ambassadors bringing reconciliation and pardon from sin to the world, "in them," the individuals in the world. From this passage we begin to realize just how much is conveyed to us. The very word of reconciliation (deposited with us) is a mighty word! How dare anyone alter, change, or reduce this word committed unto them. How dare we act as if *we* were dealing with men, or let men think they are dealing only with *us*. Must we not then be very careful of this high office? Ambassadors are absolutely responsible to their king.

The specific term "*euaggelistas*," evangelist, is rather limited in the New Testament (Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; II Timothy 4:5). The picture of an evangelist from these passages is of one who spreads the Gospel in new places. We have the example of Philip who first worked in Samaria (Acts 8:6-14) and who also worked along the coast up to Caesarea (Acts 8:40). It seems that the New Testament evangelists are nearer to our modern missionaries in ministry and work.

A complete understanding of "evangelism" must be taken into account when forming its methods. In other words, we tend to use the same methods for those who never heard the Gospel before and those who are immunized by having heard it so many, many times. From the strict New Testament sense can we really say that in communities where the Gospel has been preached many times, evangelism is not a primary work? Perhaps God is trying to tell us today that in those communities where there are many good churches teaching the genuine Gospel of Christ, edification should be its primary purpose, enabling the evangelists to go out into the new places where evangelism is a primary need.

Sometimes these "new places" are in the "old places" such as inner-cities, university campuses, transportation terminals, and communication medias. Isn't it conceivable that it might be to the

greater glory of God for a local church to rent space at O'Hare Airport, or Cleveland Hopkins, or Washington National and establish a chapel with 24-hour, seven-day-a-week Christian service than to sit through more "saturating" services? Can evangelical churches justify more brick and mortar? Or should we admit that it's easier to set up brick and mortar than to seek out living souls?

The factors for future effective evangelism are described by various scholars. In Thielicke's book, *The Trouble with the Church*, he writes of "The Decay of the Language of Preaching." This speaks to us today.

Again and again at Easter services I am shocked by the casual matter of course way in which the news that Christ is risen is taken. Anyone who has really grasped what that means would be rocked in his seat. And at least a few times I also noticed the shaking of the foundations that occur when a powerful sermon really communicates the meaning of the Easter message. When that message dawns on us we are suddenly surrounded by life, where before we had our mortgaged past at our back, and ahead of us only a future beset with anxieties. Then life suddenly looks different, and then a man will also live differently.

To suggest that the language of preaching is decayed is not to suggest that we are to disregard all "Biblical" language, nor to restring the common words in a new sequence which may bring confusion and even heresy. Francis Schaeffer has put it well: "The general evangelicals are often articulating slogans rather than communicating ideas." Carl Henry remarked, "the element missing in much evangelical theological writing is an air of exciting relevance." However, the language of our day must be understood and, to a degree, included in forms of evangelism. Certainly evangelicals who place such weight on the very words of Scripture have the equal responsibility of "selecting specific words" in preaching and evangelism. Is it a fair indictment to say that evangelicals who are so careful with scriptural words are the most careless in their words of preaching and teaching, and that liberals who are so careless with the words of Scripture are so very careful with their words of preaching and teaching? Evangelism in the 20th Century demands specific preparation and careful use of Scriptural and Gospel preaching.

Times demand diversity of method and do not allow for the emphasis of one method to the demise of another. Modern evangelism must face the historic fact of change. How much artificial conservatism, and how many later interpretations and constructions, conceal the sober fact that even what seems the most solid form in which the community has existed and still exists in time are no less radically subject to decay and destruction than all other forms of human historic life? These forms may go back four or fourteen

centuries, but their continuity does not constitute a genuine basis on which one may know the truth of the promise of Matthew 16:18.

Finally, it is the Bible which has always spoken afresh to each new generation. It is the Scriptures which uphold the church; it is not something which Christians can fabricate by their own Bible lectures and Bible studies . . . not even by the Scriptural principle, but by the very power of Scripture itself. It has been stated that it is not only Spirit who creates, sustains, and extends the church but according to Ephesians 6:17 it is the sword of the spirit, the word of God, which protects and defends it. And it is a true phenomenon that both the community and the world are reluctant to allow the word to be spoken unto it in its original and authentic form; however, it is only as this comes to pass that the world will know Him.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Lightfoot on I Thess. 3:10. *Katapti ov*, "fitting together" in its classical use, is reconciling political factions; its use in surgery is for setting bones. In the New Testament it is used of bringing a thing into its proper condition, whether for the first time, or as more commonly, after lapse.

<sup>2</sup>J. A. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 164-65.



## THESES (1982-1983)

*We are extremely proud of our students and the research that they pursue. We have asked them to share a short summary of their completed theses at ATS in the hope that others may be made aware of these sources. The theses are bound and in the ATS Library. Those graduates that responded are listed below.*

Charles E. Burkett, **The Common Fire: An Examination of the Theological/Spiritual Kinships Between the Wesleyan Holiness Movement and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.**

At the heart of the Wesleyan Holiness Movement and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, buried beneath heavy theological and cultural encrustations, there lies a single experience of radical spiritual renewal. Each movement feels that this renewal comes to those who earnestly seek it and who are in submission to the Spirit's movement. Each feels that it is characterized by love which effects moral transformation and spiritual vitality, especially as expressed in Christian service and worship. Assigned various labels, it is a work of the Holy Spirit in which the image of God is renewed within the believer. Differences obviously exist between the two, but these are largely attributable to differences of interpretation — the hard facts of experience are the same and the conclusions of theology are essentially similar. Neither exhausts the richness of spiritual renewal and may be profited in being advised by the other.

Melody Annette Funk, **Family Devotions: Studies, Surveys, and Suggestions**

What does Scripture say about practicing family devotions? What are some Christians doing with family devotions? And what are some good ways to apply scriptural teaching and suggest workable ideas for family devotions? These questions sent me first of all to Scripture, then to families in my home church and companies that publish family devotional materials, and finally to many books on the subject by Christian men and women. The answers I found convinced me that while family devotions is *not* commanded in God's Word, what I have called "the family devotion lifestyle" *is* commanded (Deuteronomy 6). So family devotions is just one way for parents to fulfill their responsibility of teaching the Bible to their children. I encourage the practice of family devotions within a whole context of *lifestyle* and have done so in this project by giving clear scriptural principles as well as realistic and practical suggestions to parents who really want to apply the commands of Deuteronomy 6 and other passages to their family lives.

Alberta Holsinger, **Train Up a Child: A Manual of Christian Instruction for Eight to Twelve Year Olds**

This manual was developed to be part of the continuous, on-going program of Christian instruction in the church. Its purpose is to build on what the children are learning at home and in the church about the Christian way of life as presented in the Bible and through the insights into these teachings as revealed to Brethren. The ten sessions consider: Who Is a Christian?; Who Is a Brethren?; Being a Christian. Each session includes Scripture, a story/discussion of the theme, a worksheet, and a number of activities related to the topic. All material has been developed within the

language, comprehension, and interest levels of middler/junior age children. It is designed to aid the teacher in preparation and presentation of each session.

### **William Jolliff, *The Transworld Trinity: A Logical Defense of the Triune Godhead***

Working from the presupposition that every biblical doctrine is totally logical, the author uses possible worlds semantics in a defense of the doctrine of divine triunity. Although this is a philosophical study, it is geared toward the non-logician. There is a purposeful avoidance of unnecessary technical terminology, and explanatory chapters introducing possible worlds logic are included.

### **Dennis J. Wilson, *The Holocaust Phenomena: Historical Correlations Between Racism Today and the Nazi Era***

After a summary of the major points developed by the thesis, the introduction challenges the reader to consider the present racial situation and his response to it as a Christian. The first chapter provides an historical overview of the conditions which existed in Germany before and during the Hitler era. In the second chapter, a study of Hitler and his minions indicates that all of the Nazi perpetrators were not lunatics. The final chapter draws analogies between Nazi Germany and present day America. Many similarities are present. Unfortunately, people have not changed all that much in the last forty years.

### **Gary Wooden, *A Gathering of Believers: Protestant Roots of the Small Group Movement***

Chapter One examines the two-fold nature of early Christianity — small group structures for nurture, evangelism, and discipleship versus the large group structures for corporate worship and celebration. The Christian and Jewish roots of small groups are uncovered as well as the factors which contributed to their success. Then, the disappearance of small groups along with the resulting lack of mission and increasing passivity are linked with the rise of monasticism.

Chapter Two explores the development of Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Luther's early strategy for the reformation of the church is found to be closely linked with the gathering of earnest Christians into small groups for intensive instruction, nurture, and fellowship. The failure to carry out this concept is then associated with the intrusion of the State into the affairs of the Lutheran Church.

Chapter Three is a discussion of the movement known as Pietism and the role that the early Pietists envisioned for small groups in the further reformation of the church. The roots of the *collegia*, conventicles, and *ecclesiolae in ecclesia* are discovered in relation to Philip Jacob Spener's strategy for reformation centering in the widespread use of *collegia* or small groups.

Chapter Four elaborates on the rise of the renewed Moravian Church under the leadership of Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. The manner in which Zinzendorf adapted the Pietist's *collegia* into the organizational structure of the community of Herrnhut is discussed. The awakening of Continental Pietism under Zinzendorf is then associated with one phase of the general awakening of the eighteenth century.

Chapter Five is an exposition of the long tradition of the *collegia* and

religious societies (small groups) in the American colonies. Their roots are traced, their roles in the revivals of Frelinghuysen and Edwards are explored, and their widespread appearance and impact during the Great Awakening are documented. Lastly, the Great Awakening is associated with the second phase of the general awakening of the eighteenth century.

Chapter Six considers the role that small groups played in the success of early Methodism which is seen as the third phase of the general awakening. The roots of the Methodist bands and classes are determined and the relationship of Wesley to previous small group movements is discussed.

Chapter Seven draws together all of the conclusions which have arisen regarding the small group movement within early Protestantism.











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# Ashland Theological Journal

Ashland Theological Seminary

Ashland, Ohio

Fall 1984

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## ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

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Editorial Committee:  
David A. Rausch, Editor  
William H. Myers  
Ben Witherington, III

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ISSUE

In this 1984 issue, our contributors discuss a variety of issues that face the ministry today. Dr. Jerry R. Flora, Professor of New Testament and Theology, provides a historical overview of the contribution of women in the ministry of the Brethren Church. In "Ninety Years of Brethren Women in Ministry," Dr. Flora attempts to describe as accurately as possible the activities of Brethren women recognized as ministers from 1894 to 1984. He suggests some possible answers that account for the decline of women in the formal ministry of the Brethren Church today. Reaching farther back into the past in order to clearly interpret God's purpose for women in ministry in the present, Dr. Ben Witherington, III, Assistant Professor of Biblical and Wesleyan Studies, in "Women in the Ministry of Jesus," seeks to strike a balance between Jesus as a "traditionalist" and Jesus as a "feminist." Based upon his recent book, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Professor Witherington is particularly concerned that an accurate portrayal of the place of women in the Christian community be provided so that the Spirit is not quenched as he works in the lives of the women of God.

Our third article is by Dr. William H. Myers, Assistant Professor of Urban Ministries at Ashland Theological Seminary. Professor Myers provides an honest and earnest evaluation of theological education as it relates to the black community. In "Two Seminaries or One: A Plea for a Black-White Dialogue on Theological Education," Professor Myers is concerned about the failure of the theological academic community to enter into sincere black-white dialogue on this subject. This failure results in divisive and inadequate solutions to one of the most challenging problems that faces the ministry today.

Our sermon piece is provided by Professor Mary Ellen Drushal, Assistant Professor of Christian Education. In "Steeple Sitters," she challenges the Christian to overcome the visual distortion that mars a vibrant ministry and to follow the total teaching of Scripture as it relates to loving one's neighbor.

We at Ashland Theological Seminary are pleased that Professors Drushal, Myers and Witherington (relative newcomers to the ATS faculty) have joined us in providing a broad theological education for our diverse student body. I am particularly pleased that Dr. Myers and Dr. Witherington are now members of the editorial committee of the *Ashland Theological Journal*.

—David A. Rausch, **Editor**

# NINETY YEARS OF BRETHREN WOMEN IN MINISTRY

by Jerry R. Flora<sup>1</sup>

When the Progressive wing of the German Baptist Brethren organized in 1882-83 as the Brethren Church, they moved quickly to grant women the privilege and responsibility of church leadership. The first General Conference met in 1882, the second in 1887, and the third in 1892, after which they met annually. By 1894 both the General Conference and most of the district conferences had passed resolutions favoring the equality of men and women in the church or the inclusion of women in the ranks of pastors and missionaries.<sup>2</sup>

The first woman was ordained in 1890, but no collection today contains the denomination's periodical, *The Brethren Evangelist*, for the years 1890-93. Therefore, this study of Brethren women in ministry must begin at 1894, the earliest year for which such record exists. The purpose of the article is not to argue for or against the right of women to be ordained or serve as pastors,<sup>3</sup> but to describe as accurately as possible the activities of those who were recognized as ministers in the Brethren Church. The method will be to take "soundings" at fifteen-year intervals in the period 1894 to 1984, summarizing what was published in *The Brethren Evangelist*. Not every woman designated as a minister will be mentioned, but only those active in the fifteen-year increments.

## 1894

It has been estimated that, when the Brethren Church began in 1883, it had about 6,000 members. A dozen years later 12,700 members were reported in 173 congregations.<sup>4</sup>

(1) MARY MALINDA STERLING (1859-1933) of Masontown, Pennsylvania, was the first woman to be ordained in the Brethren Church (1890). She was also the first president of the national women's auxiliary, the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor (S.S.C.E.), which she led from its founding in 1887 until 1892. The year 1894 opened with a report that she had been holding revival meetings at Masontown and Middle Run in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, and had baptized two persons in the Monongahela River.<sup>5</sup> The Middle Run meeting closed on January 30, with another convert who was to be baptized by her brother, Rev. A.J. Sterling.<sup>6</sup>

In June the denomination learned that she had spent seven months in evangelistic preaching in West Virginia and Pennsyl-





*Vianna Detwiler*



*Mary Pence*



*Dr. Florence  
Newberry Gribble*

vania. During this time she had preached 207 sermons in 187 days, receiving 27 additions to the church, 18 of whom she herself baptized. She commented that the reception of "woman's preaching" was more favorable than she might have expected.<sup>7</sup> Some indication of the truth of this was shown when Mary Sterling was invited to deliver the Sunday morning sermon at the 1894 General Conference.<sup>8</sup>

Prior to that, she had baptized four persons during a communion service at Top Sail, Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup> Her evangelistic activity was also considered newsworthy by the *Weekly Review*, a West Virginia publication which described her work.<sup>10</sup> Toward the close of 1894 she reported that she had been able to organize a new Brethren church at Toll Gate, West Virginia, in Ritchie County, with 24 charter members.<sup>11</sup>

(2) LAURA E. N. GROSSNICKLE (1858-1934), a native of Mapleville, Maryland, was the second woman to be ordained in the Brethren Church (1891). 1894 was the third year of her pastorate at Fairview, Indiana, near South Bend. During the winter she preached a short series of revival meetings at Elkhart, Indiana, with one public confession of faith resulting.<sup>12</sup> In May *The Brethren Evangelist* printed what Editor S. J. Harrison called "one of Sister Grossnickle's best sermons — one that has thrilled every audience that has ever heard her deliver it."<sup>13</sup> The message, "What Think Ye of Christ?" was given four large pages of text in order to publish it in its entirety. The sermon describes Messianic prophecy and its fulfillment in Jesus, together with various reactions to Him in His own day. It then turns to how Jesus is perceived in our time, concluding with a ringing evangelistic challenge for hearers to make the Nazarene the Savior and Lord of their lives.<sup>14</sup>

On May 22, in the evening service at Loree, Indiana, Laura Grossnickle preached to the Indiana Ministerial Association what the reporter, Rev. R. R. Teeter, called "an inspiring sermon," and the following day led the ministers in a Bible study.<sup>15</sup> In addition to serving the Fairview congregation, she also preached every other week at New Troy, Michigan, where she conducted a communion service on Saturday, June 2.<sup>16</sup>

In July, she published an article about the national women's work, "Our S.S.C.E.," in which she challenged women to attend the approaching General Conference and unselfishly support the fledgling organization.<sup>17</sup> At Ashland College the next month Laura Grossnickle was elected president of the S.S.C.E., which also decided to send her among the churches as a field organizer. The auxiliary at this time reported thirty member societies.<sup>18</sup> She continued to work as a pastor through the remainder of 1894,<sup>19</sup> while preparing to begin her travel responsibilities January 1 from her

family home in Maryland. Before the year concluded she held a revival meeting in New Troy, receiving five confessions of faith in one week, bringing to 21 the additions to that church in 1894.<sup>20</sup> She also published an article on "How Shall the Brethren Church Attain a Higher Standard of Spirituality?" "The great secret," she wrote, "is a close walk with God. . . . Worshiping Him, we grow like Him."<sup>21</sup>

During her six months as S.S.C.E. field worker in 1895, Rev. Grossnickle traveled constantly, preaching nearly every night and twice on Sundays. From January through June she visited 77 congregations, 20 former societies, and organized 38 new S.S.C.E. groups.<sup>22</sup>

(3) A third woman active in pastoral work during 1894 was ESTHER L. DICKEY, of Sidney, Indiana. Early in the year it was reported that a month-long "protracted meeting" she led at her church had resulted in twelve baptisms.<sup>23</sup> There were tensions, however, between Mrs. Dickey and the larger church, for in an open letter published in May she charged that the denomination was "locking arms with secret societies" and conforming to the world.<sup>24</sup> The following month *The Brethren Evangelist* published her article "For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."<sup>25</sup> In August, Mrs. Dickey had the infrequent pastoral responsibility of conducting the funeral of another minister, Rev. Enos Sala,<sup>26</sup> after which her article "Born of God" appeared.<sup>27</sup> The issues which she raised earlier continued to disturb her, resulting in her withdrawal from the Brethren Church late in 1894.<sup>28</sup>

(4) According to the denominational yearbook, LIZZIE MASTERS was pastor at Elkport, Iowa, from 1893 to 1899. Nothing to date is known of her service, except that in May 1894 *The Brethren Evangelist* published an article by her from Wood, Iowa, entitled "Perils Threaten God's Children." It contained a challenge for all ministers and teachers to be diligent in handling the Scriptures, lest they teach as doctrine the commandments of men (cf. Matt. 15:9)<sup>29</sup>

(5) A fifth woman active in Brethren ministry during 1894 was CLARA MYERS FLORA (1850-ca. 1920). A native of Illinois, she, like her husband Noah, was ordained, and they always served together in a team ministry. The first issue of *The Brethren Evangelist* for 1894 contained her article "Almost a Christian" and the report that she was preaching regularly at Brooklyn, Iowa, a mission church of the Illiokota District Conference.<sup>30</sup> The two ministers held a revival meeting at Brooklyn which resulted in 21 confessions of faith, Clara Flora preaching half of the time.<sup>31</sup>

From their home in Dallas Center, Iowa, she also traveled regularly to Leon and New Virginia for preaching appointments.<sup>32</sup> Her



practice at such places was to arrive on Saturday, preach Saturday night and again on Sunday morning and evening.<sup>33</sup> On June 9 she assisted Isaac Thomas in the communion service at Leon on Saturday evening, then preached on Sunday morning.<sup>34</sup>

In midsummer it was announced that Clara Flora, whose sermons often received complimentary notice in reports from the churches, would preach the opening sermon at the Illiokota Conference in Milledgeville, Illinois. The only other scheduled preacher was the noted orator-evangelist, Stephen H. Bashor.<sup>35</sup> On her trip to the conference (a distance of 216 miles) she preached five times in five days.<sup>36</sup> Shortly afterward she received seven public confessions of faith during one weekend of preaching at Leon, Iowa.<sup>37</sup>

Late in 1894 *The Brethren Evangelist* printed her article "Inconsistent Prayers," in which she criticized the practice in some congregations of interceding for lawmakers but refusing them church membership.<sup>38</sup> The same issue of the periodical reported that she and her husband had preached a series of services at Leon from September 30 to October 18. Audiences were too large for the space available, causing some persons to go home without hearing the speaker. But the meetings resulted in 33 confessions of faith, 31 of whom were baptized.<sup>39</sup>

(6) ETTA TOMBAUGH of Rochester, Indiana, also appeared in the ministerial lists of *The Brethren Annual* from 1894 to 1898, but nothing is known at this date of her pastoral activity.

(7) The year 1894 saw the beginning of the ministerial service of SARAH (SADIE) FREAS GIBBONS (1864-1920), who was ordained not long after the death of her first husband, Charles Gibbons, in 1888. Writing from Independence, Kansas, she produced an article on faith, hope, and love which she titled "Three Sisters." The home of these sisters is in the heart, she wrote, with God as their Father and righteous works their offspring.<sup>40</sup>

## 1909

Fifteen years later Rev. Henry R. Holsinger, the founding leader of the Brethren Church, had been removed by death, and the denomination was just over a quarter-century of age. Membership that year was 18,607 persons distributed in 219 congregations,<sup>41</sup> a considerable increase from 1894.

(1) The former Laura Grossnickle was now LAURA GROSS-NICKLE HEDRICK, having been married in 1898 to George W. Hedrick, a widower of Dayton, Virginia. She stepped down at that time from the presidency of the Sisters' Society, and was serving in 1909 as secretary of the national organization. In February *The Brethren Evangelist* published her article "The Bible a Book for the Home," in which she wrote that the Bible is preeminently the book



of the home because it meets the sorrows and hungers of every person. It does this by revealing the Savior who draws human hearts to Himself for sympathy while at the same time filling them with hope and joy.<sup>42</sup>

In June she was a ministerial delegate at the Maryland-Northern Virginia District Conference, where she read a paper on the work of the S.S.C.E. The reception was so favorable that it was "ordered sent to the *Evangelist* for publication."<sup>43</sup> At the General Conference in August she was reelected national secretary. But George Hedrick's health was poor, so in late 1909 he and his wife traveled to Florida to investigate buying property there.<sup>44</sup> "Florida As We Saw It" contained Laura Hedrick's announcement that she and her husband, together with Daniel Crofford of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, had purchased 300 acres west of Hallandale, near Fort Lauderdale, and would soon move there.<sup>45</sup>

(2) Noah and CLARA FLORA continued their team ministry in the state of Iowa, noting that the congregation at Brooklyn once numbered 200 members but had run down. In mid-1909 Clara Flora was pastoring there and also at Udell; at the same time, together with her husband, she was caring for the Leon, Iowa, congregation since their pastor, Sadie Gibbons, had left.<sup>46</sup> For the Iliokota District Conference in October, Clara Flora was scheduled to give a half-hour of "Bible readings and comments" before the communion service.<sup>47</sup> The conference met at the Brethren mission in Chicago with 60 present when she spoke on "The Sacrifice of Christ for Us."<sup>48</sup>

(3) SADIE GIBBONS started the year 1909 as pastor at Leon, Iowa, "where she has been for quite a long time," Editor A. D. Gnagey observed.<sup>49</sup> During January she held a two-week revival meeting at Garwin, Iowa, with one confession of faith resulting.<sup>50</sup> On February 4, she became pastor at Portis, Kansas.<sup>51</sup> In the first month of her work there she reported four accessions to that church's membership, three of them by baptism.<sup>52</sup>

The congregation quickly responded to her leadership, surprising her shortly afterward with gifts in appreciation of her work.<sup>53</sup> by mid-June she was able to report four more additions by confession and baptism.<sup>54</sup> In September she sent word to *The Brethren Evangelist* that, since June, ten more members had joined the Portis congregation.<sup>55</sup> In October she spoke twice to the Kanemorado District Conference in its meeting at Carleton, Nebraska, first on "The Country Church; Its Needs and How to Supply Them" and then on "The Personal Worker: Who He Is." She observed that, fifty years before, all personal workers were men, but now women too could engage in this form of evangelism.<sup>56</sup> Her pastoral activities also included performing a wedding late in the year.<sup>57</sup>

(4) MARY MELISSA WAGEMAN BAUMAN (1876-1909) came from the Methodist Church into the Brethren and married Rev. Louis S. Bauman, both in 1898. She was ordained the following year by the Roann, Indiana, congregation, and in 1906 organized the first local Sisterhood of Mary and Martha for the girls of the First Brethren Church in Philadelphia. From there in January 1909 she wrote "Childhood's Prayer All Wrong," one of several responses to criticisms of the traditional bedtime prayer "Now I lay me down to sleep . . . ." She noted that her son Glenn, who had died at an early age, was comforted rather than frightened by the line "If I should die before I wake."<sup>58</sup>

The denomination learned in mid-summer that Mary Bauman was very ill with "a full developed case of typhoid malaria,"<sup>59</sup> from which she died on September 12. She was buried in Philadelphia's historic Germantown cemetery next to the ashes of her son.<sup>60</sup> In December *The Brethren Evangelist* posthumously published her final article, "Loyalty to the Holy Spirit," in which she wrote, "Oh, know that the Spirit has come to make our daily lives an exhibition of divine power, and a revelation of what God can do for and through His children. And the Spirit *will* come to an open, praying, willing heart. It is not so much now and then a special gift, but He comes morning by morning, hour by hour, step by step. Just as the branch gets sap from the vine, unconsciously and unceasingly, so comes the Holy Spirit to us from the Heavenly Vine."<sup>61</sup>

(5) Not much is known of details in the service of LOVINA ELLEN YOUNG MEYERS (1862-1933), the wife of Rev. M. C. Meyers.<sup>62</sup> The only report of her in the denominational periodical for 1909 was in January, when it noted that the Meyerses had moved from Pittsburgh to Masontown, Pennsylvania, to take the church there.<sup>63</sup>

(6) According to *The Brethren Annual*, ANTONIA WALKER, an ordained minister, was pastor at Beaconsfield, Iowa, near Leon, for at least fifteen years (1902-17). 1909 would have been about the mid-point of her service there, but nothing more is known at present of her work.<sup>64</sup>

(7) VIANNA DETWILER (1876?-1921) was one of thirteen children in a family which moved from Ohio to Ridgely, Maryland, about 1881. She was ordained in 1901 while president of the S.S.C.E. (1898-1905), after which she worked at the Brethren mission in Montreal, Quebec. Early in 1909 she spent over a month in Toronto in the interests of the church, then returned to Montreal to work with Dr. C. F. Yoder, superintendent of the mission.<sup>65</sup> Having studied at the Maryland State Normal School, Ashland College, and the University of Chicago, she was uniquely qualified to write in the symposium "Where College Training Has Been Indispensable."<sup>66</sup>

She continued to serve sacrificially in the Montreal mission and to appeal for funds through channels open to her.<sup>67</sup> In October *The Brethren Evangelist* published her article "Woman's Work for Christ," in which she maintained that, while Christianity does not set woman free from home obligations, it does free her to serve in a Christian ministry where Galatians 3:28 is true.<sup>68</sup> Later that month she left on a trip that took her to England, Scotland, and France.<sup>69</sup>

(8) From 1906 until 1908 the name of ADA GARBER DRUSHAL (1881-1975) was included in the ministerial lists as a missionary-evangelist along with her well-known husband, Rev. G. E. Drushal. Together they had founded the Brethren mission at Lost Creek, Kentucky, in October 1905. The only notice of her work in 1909 came in March, when Samuel Kilhefner wrote to *The Brethren Evangelist* that she had preached at Lost Creek with "sledgehammer blows."<sup>70</sup>

(9) As will be noted later, it is possible that MARGARET HOOVER (d. 1921) was in active service about this time, although no dates for her work are yet available.

(10) MRS. T. E. RICHARDS was reported in *The Brethren Annual* for 1907 through 1910 to be pastor with her husband at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It is assumed that she was ordained since her name appeared without designation in lists where unordained ministers were specially noted. *The Brethren Evangelist* contained no report of her pastoral activities during 1909.

(11) BERTHA MAY BELL was first mentioned in the 1908 ministerial list, but as unordained. In June 1909 it was announced that she would take the place of Etta Warvel Bowman, accompanying the C. F. Yoders in opening a Brethren mission work in Argentina.<sup>71</sup> They sailed on August 11 aboard the *S. S. Teutonic*.<sup>72</sup> Ten weeks later *The Brethren Evangelist* carried Miss Bell's letter describing their arrival in Brazil on the way to Argentina.<sup>73</sup>

(12) ALFRETTE (ETTA) WARVEL BOWMAN, president of the S.S.C.E. from 1906 to 1911, began the year 1909 as pastor at the Brethren Church in Akron, Indiana. In February she became pastor at Claypool, Indiana.<sup>74</sup> She was planning on missionary service in South America with Dr. and Mrs. Yoder,<sup>75</sup> but by June it was evident that she would not be able to go because of her father's terminal illness.<sup>76</sup> Bertha May Bell would be her substitute. After about six months in the Claypool church, Mrs. Bowman left<sup>77</sup> and was reelected national S.S.C.E. president at the General Conference in August.<sup>78</sup>

(13) MARGARET A. COOKE became pastor at the Brush Valley and Glad Run, Pennsylvania, churches early in 1909.<sup>79</sup> Her leadership caused the former congregation to prosper so that it was said,



"This is the greatest place for everybody to go to church, in the Brotherhood" (L. S. Bauman).<sup>80</sup> No more was reported of her work there that year, except that on September 1 she concluded her pastorate.<sup>81</sup>

(14) MRS. P. J. JENNINGS made her first appearance in *The Brethren Annual* for 1909. She was pastor at Allegheny and Oriskany, Virginia, while her husband pastored the Bethlehem Brethren Church at Harrisonburg. However, no report of her pastoral activity was published during the year 1909.

(15) The name of MAUDE CRIPE (1886-1976) — later to become Mrs. Leonard Webb during her missionary service in Argentina (1911-17) — first appeared in the ministerial list of 1909, where she was designated as an unordained minister. She was a missionary at Lost Creek, Kentucky, when she spoke to the Ashland, Ohio, S.S.C.E. in the spring of that year.<sup>82</sup>

## 1924

Fifteen years later a new situation confronted the churches: the aftermath of World War I, the Russian revolution, the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, the granting of woman suffrage, the coming of Prohibition, the social outbreak that marked the Roaring 'Twenties, and the financial uncertainty that produced the Great Depression. The Brethren Church continued its growth (to 21,848 in 1920 and 22,682 in 1927), but the number of congregations was declining (to 171 in 1920 and 159 in 1927).<sup>83</sup> The denomination was forty years old, and a new generation of leaders were serving in the changed atmosphere of 1924.

(1) Most prominent, perhaps, was DR. FLORENCE NEWBERRY GRIBBLE (1880-1942), a medical missionary to French Equatorial Africa. After working as a physician in the U.S. and in Africa, she was ordained in 1917 and began her service with the Brethren Church upon her return to the field in 1918. Her husband of ten years, James Gribble, died in 1923. A prolific writer, Dr. Gribble contributed nothing to the denomination's periodical in the year after her husband's death except letters detailing the nature of her continuing medical work. Five years later she had completed the 426-page manuscript of *Undaunted Hope*, a biography of James Gribble.<sup>84</sup>

(2) NORAL PEARL BRACKEN DAVIS (1888-1935) was living in her home town, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, during 1924. Having pastored briefly following her ordination, she then was appointed National Superintendent of the Children's Division for the denomination. In that capacity during 1921 she had visited 54 church schools<sup>85</sup> and in 1924 continued to write curriculum materials for children's workers.



(3) MARY PENCE of Limestone, Tennessee, was ordained in 1919 after teaching about six years at Lost Creek, Kentucky. Through most of the 'twenties she was pastor of the Telford Chapel at Limestone, near Johnson City. Early in 1924 *The Brethren Evangelist* carried her article "A Church Ill — the Lack of Worship," in which she wrote, "The church today is too busy about much serving to sit at the feet of Jesus to worship. . . . Prayer has become almost wholly petitions with little praise. . . . Sociability is a good thing in the house of God, but if there is not the proper reverence and the attitude of worship, the sociability will not be fellowship in the Lord Jesus, but merely that of the world."<sup>86</sup> Writing again in November, Rev. Pence noted that the Limestone congregation had been organized in 1910, but said nothing about her five years as its pastor.<sup>87</sup>

(4) A native of Abey, Lebanon, EMMA ABOUD (1880-1967) came to the United States around 1894. Using her knowledge of Middle Eastern customs and adopting native dress at times, she became a well-known evangelist in the Brethren Church beginning in 1920. In February 1924, Rev. E. B. Shaver reported on the successful public meetings she had conducted in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, resulting in 25 confessions of faith at Maurertown and 20 at the St. Luke church.<sup>88</sup>

Similar results followed her effort of three weeks at the Bethlehem congregation near Harrisonburg, Virginia,<sup>89</sup> and the New Lebanon, Ohio, church near Dayton.<sup>90</sup> In early October *The Brethren Evangelist* reported another successful series of services at Mathias, West Virginia. Rev. Arthur Snider, who described those meetings, wrote, "Almost every night hundreds and sometimes a half thousand were turned away because of not sufficient room, and yet the church holds between four and five hundred."<sup>91</sup> The close of the year saw an announcement that she was now available for further evangelistic meetings, and could be contacted at Dayton, Ohio, or Buena Vista, Virginia.<sup>92</sup> She continued this activity through the decade of the 'twenties and resumed it in 1940.

(5) GRACE P. SRACK, the widow of L. E. Srack (1867-1920), had planned to work with her husband as a Brethren missionary in Africa. But he died only one month after the announcement was made to the denomination. Mrs. Srack pastored briefly, then taught at the Lost Creek, Kentucky, mission beginning in 1922. During the Southern California Bible Conference in July 1924, she conducted a school of missions for the Brethren in attendance.<sup>93</sup>

### 1939

The next fifteen years brought growth and tension to the Brethren Church. Membership increased to 29,389 in 1939, but the

number of congregations continued to decline to 152 in that year (apparently about sixty congregations disbanded between 1900 and 1930).<sup>94</sup> The tensions, which had their roots back in the 'teens, produced two groups who have been called by later students the Brethrenists and the Fundamentalists.<sup>95</sup> The General Conference of 1939 divided into two denominations. The latter group (now the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches) retained control of nearly all the missionary program, both home and foreign, while the former (the Brethren Church) controlled Ashland College and Seminary. The "Grace group" therefore found it necessary to build a new educational institution at Winona Lake, Indiana; the "Ashland group," beginning anew with the Yoders in Argentina and the Drushals in Kentucky, had to develop a new program of missionary outreach. Much of what *The Brethren Evangelist* published in 1939 was related to the controversy as the denomination drifted into the maelstrom.

(1) DR. FLORENCE GRIBBLE continued to write frequent reports of her activity in Africa. In addition, two articles by her were published in 1939. "Thanksgiving" was an address that she delivered at the Bassai Conference on Thanksgiving Day of 1938, in which she reflected on thirty years of service in African missions.<sup>96</sup> "The Lord's Preserves" described divine safekeeping in her experience on the basis of Psalm 121.<sup>97</sup>

(2) FLORENCE BICKEL, a registered nurse from Elkhart, Indiana, joined the African missionary team in 1924. She was ordained in her home church on Christmas Day of 1922, then took specialized training in France before proceeding to Africa. During the early months of 1939 she was on furlough in the United States, where she spoke in January to the Mid-Year conference of Southern California at the Second Brethren Church of Los Angeles.<sup>98</sup> Shortly afterward, while preparing to return to the mission field, she wrote "Back Again to My Beloved Black Saints."<sup>99</sup> She left New York on April 20 and arrived on the field June 13, returning to her work at the Bellevue Mission Station.<sup>100</sup>

(3) LAURA EVANGELINE LARSON WAGNER went to Argentina in 1931 as part of the missionary effort there, and was included in *The Brethren Annual* list of ministers from 1932 through 1935. She was the last missionary to go to South America prior to the division of the denomination. While serving there she met and married Rev. Ricardo Wagner. Mrs. Larson-Wagner (as her name often appeared) wrote two contrasting articles published in 1939. The first was "Indifference, the Missionary's Problem in Latin America." "Our Lord once declared," she wrote, "that a spiritual night is coming during which it will be *impossible* for any man to work. That night is *almost here*."<sup>101</sup> The second, "Darkness Reced-

ing Before the Night," offered the other side of the picture in its report of victories won on the Argentine field.<sup>102</sup>

## 1954

"The Ashland group" survived the division of the denomination, but lost the greater part of its young leaders and workers, including most of the women serving as missionaries. The membership in 1940 was put at 17,282 persons in about 100 congregations. By 1955 it was listed as 18,672 in 99 congregations.<sup>103</sup> In 1954 no women were working as pastors, no ordained women were in missionary service, and only one had been ordained since 1939.

(1) EDNA PUTERBAUGH NICHOLAS (d. 1967) was ordained in 1928 at Elkhart, Indiana. She did some evangelistic preaching, occasional pulpit supply, and served for many years as secretary of the Elkhart church. In 1954 *The Brethren Evangelist* published a devotional article by her, "I Go A Fishing," in which she observed that, more than fishing, what Jesus' disciples needed after Easter was to see Him. Seeing Him, they loved Him, and loving Him, they served Him.<sup>104</sup>

(2) LORETTA CARRITHERS is another Brethren woman who worked in a team ministry with her husband. Following the division of 1939-40, she was appointed Superintendent of Children's Work in 1940. In that capacity she wrote a weekly column for children in the denomination's periodical under the name "Aunt Loretta" until 1944. At that time she took full pastoral responsibility for the Mansfield, Ohio, congregation in the absence of her husband, who was commissioned a U.S. Army chaplain. After several years as a licensed minister, she was ordained in 1948 at Peru, Indiana. Elmer and Loretta Carrithers served as co-pastors again at Mansfield from 1950 through 1953. In 1954 they had recently moved to Des Moines, Iowa, where they have lived ever since.<sup>105</sup>

(3) In a July 1954 article, Brethren antiquarian Freeman H. Ankrum described the Berachah Church four miles east of Glenford, Ohio, and two miles south of Brownsville. There as a boy he had heard MARGARET (MAGGIE) HOOVER as "among those who supplied the pulpit from time to time,"<sup>106</sup> but today nothing more is known of her activity (see no. 9 above under 1909).

## 1969

The 'sixties were a crucial decade in American history witnessing, among other things, the Cuban missile crisis; the murders of President John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy; the escalation of involvement in the Viet Nam War; and the social revolution which affected many aspects of American life until today. The denomination's statistics for 1970



showed a membership of 17,327 in 116 local churches.<sup>107</sup> In 1969 no Brethren woman was serving as a pastor anywhere in the United States. No ordained Brethren woman was working on a mission field. *The Brethren Evangelist* had no articles to publish by the women recognized as ministers.

The only item related to the subject of this study was "Power of the Female in Christian Influence."<sup>108</sup> It was a lengthy unsigned review of R. Pierce Beaver's 1968 book *All Loves Excelling* (revised and reissued in 1980 as *American Protestant Women in World Mission*). Beaver amassed an impressive wealth of data to document the role the women historically played in advancing the Christian missionary cause, especially when leadership in their home churches was, for whatever reason, denied to them.

### 1984

The fifteen years following 1969 saw little change in the Brethren Church's employment of women in ministerial capacity. The 1979 membership figure was 15,082 persons in 123 congregations,<sup>109</sup> and by 1983 that had become 14,424 in 126 churches.

The decade of the 'seventies was without question a period of heightening sensitivity to the role of women in the church and in society. The General Conference of 1974 adopted a recommendation to "encourage women and men to engage in team ministry as ordained persons or as lay persons."<sup>110</sup> About three years later a few young women studying at Ashland Theological Seminary began to investigate the history of Brethren women in ministry.<sup>111</sup>

In December 1983, JENNIFER JONES RAY was ordained together with her husband James at Roann, Indiana, making her the first Brethren woman so designated in the quarter-century since 1957.<sup>112</sup> She appeared before the Brethren Pastors' Conference on Faith and Order in April 1983 to speak of her experiences as a woman in ministry.<sup>113</sup> The Pastors' Conference considered several presentations on the ordination of women in the Brethren Church, as did the National Ministerial Association meetings at the 1983 General Conference and the 1984 Pastors' Conference.<sup>114</sup>

Out of this extended discussion a six-man committee was appointed to see if a consensus could be reached. Three of the committee were known to oppose ordaining women, and three favored it. The committee brought to the 1984 General Conference ministers' sessions a recommendation that, since "the local church is ultimately responsible for the calling, licensure, and ordination of the candidate for ministry," each congregation should reach a decision on the question and periodically review its policies. The committee further recommended that, while district ministerial examining boards and the National Ordination Council "examine candidates



in the areas of personal life, theology, ethics, and personal habits," they should remain neutral on matters of sex, race, and national origin. Therefore, the final word on Brethren women in ministry would rest with each local congregation according to their understanding of Scripture. After discussion over a period of several days, the recommendation was defeated by a vote of 39 for and 45 against. Whether women will be admitted to the Brethren ministry will continue to be decided by the various district examining boards and the National Ordination Council.

### Concluding Observations

We have learned that, during the first generation of the Brethren Church's life, a few women (no more than fifteen at any time) played a significant part in the denomination's formal ministry. That practice declined in the two decades between World War I and the division of 1939-40. Most of the shrinking number worked in foreign missions; very few served as pastors. Many members who have grown up in the church since that time have no knowledge at all of women in the official ministry of the church.

What will account for this change in Brethren practice? A number of possible answers suggest themselves. (1) The principal historian among the Grace Brethren has offered the opinion that better interpretation of Scripture brought about the shift.<sup>115</sup> (2) Another possibility notes that, beginning about the time of the great international missionary conference at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910, increasing calls went out to the churches for men to take leadership lest the heroic element of Christian faith be feminized.<sup>116</sup> (3) Still another suggestion observes the sociological change which occurred as, through the 'twenties and 'thirties, the number of available congregations declined while the denomination's membership increased. Some of the smaller churches, formerly pastored by women, were combined to form larger congregations or allowed to die out altogether.<sup>117</sup> (4) The influence of Protestant fundamentalism was considerable in the Brethren Church, both before and after the 1939-40 division. Since fundamentalism has generally looked askance at female leadership in the church, this may help to explain what happened.<sup>118</sup> (5) Reacting to the extreme social gospel movement, Biblical conservatism turned severely inward between 1920 and 1940, coming out of its shell only partially between 1940 and 1960.<sup>119</sup> Acceptance of women in leadership prior to World War I had been part of the evangelical-led social action which began in the mid-1800s and climaxed in 1919-20 with the suffrage and prohibition amendments to the U.S. Constitution. In the aftermath of those victories considerable energy dissipated both in the church and in society.<sup>120</sup>

Much more remains to be done, however, before any of these — or, more likely, any combination of them — can give a definitive answer to the question, Why? Hopefully, continuing and future research will be able to discover and arrange all the pieces of the mosaic.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The writer is happy to acknowledge the assistance of his wife Julia Ann in the research for this article.

<sup>2</sup>For details, see Jerry R. Flora, "Brethren Women in Ministry: Century One," *Ashland Theological Journal* 15 (1982): 19-20.

<sup>3</sup>The author has stated his position in "The Ordination of Women in the Brethren Church," an unpublished paper prepared for the 1983 Brethren Pastors' Conference on Faith and Order.

<sup>4</sup>Statistics are those summarized in the magisterial study of Dale R. Stoffer, "The Background and Development of Thought and Practice in the German Baptist Brethren (Dunker) and The Brethren (Progressive) Churches (c. 1650-1979)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1980), p. 531. See also Stoffer's article "The Brethren Church 1883-1983," *The Brethren Evangelist* 105 (August 1983): 14-18.

<sup>5</sup>*The Brethren Evangelist* (hereafter abbreviated *BE*) 16 (January 24, 1894): 12.

<sup>6</sup>*BE* 16 (February 14, 1894): 13.

<sup>7</sup>*BE* 16 (June 6, 1894): 12.

<sup>8</sup>*BE* 16 (September 5, 1894): 2.

<sup>9</sup>*BE* 16 (October 3, 1894): 13.

<sup>10</sup>*BE* 16 (December 12, 1894): 9.

<sup>11</sup>*BE* 16 (December 19, 1894): 3; *BE* 16 (December 26, 1894): 13.

<sup>12</sup>*BE* 16 (May 30, 1894): 11.

<sup>13</sup>*BE* 16 (May 9, 1894): 1.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

<sup>15</sup>*BE* 16 (June 6, 1894): 11.

<sup>16</sup>*BE* 16 (May 23, 1894): 13.

<sup>17</sup>*BE* 16 (July 18, 1894): 6-7.

<sup>18</sup>*BE* 16 (September 5, 1894): 3.

<sup>19</sup>*BE* 16 (September 12, 1894): 14.

<sup>20</sup>*BE* 16 (November 28, 1894): 10.

<sup>21</sup>*BE* 16 (September 19, 1894): 2.

<sup>22</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1896, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup>*BE* 16 (January 10, 1894): 28.

<sup>24</sup>*BE* 16 (May 2, 1894): 14.

<sup>25</sup>*BE* 16 (June 27, 1894): 5-6.

<sup>26</sup>*BE* 16 (August 8, 1894): 14.

<sup>27</sup>*BE* 16 (August 22, 1894): 7.

<sup>28</sup>*BE* 16 (December 12, 1894): 8-9 contains a letter from her and reply by Editor A. D. Gnagey.

<sup>29</sup>*BE* 16 (May 30, 1894): 7.

<sup>30</sup>*BE* 16 (January 3, 1894): 7, 9.

<sup>31</sup>*BE* 16 (January 31, 1894): 11.

<sup>32</sup>*BE* 16 (March 21, 1894): 14.

<sup>33</sup>*BE* 16 (June 6, 1894): 13.

- <sup>34</sup>BE 16 (June 27, 1894): 12.
- <sup>35</sup>BE 16 (July 18, 1894): 21; BE 16 (September 26, 1894): 12.
- <sup>36</sup>BE 16 (September 5, 1894): 13.
- <sup>37</sup>BE 16 (September 19, 1894): 12.
- <sup>38</sup>BE 16 (November 7, 1894): 6.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup>BE 16 (March 28, 1894): 5-6.
- <sup>41</sup>Stoffer, "Background and Development," pp. 531-32.
- <sup>42</sup>BE 31 (February 10, 1909): 6.
- <sup>43</sup>BE 31 (June 16, 1909): 16. It subsequently appeared in the issue of June 30, 1909.
- <sup>44</sup>BE 31 (November 10, 1909): 16.
- <sup>45</sup>BE 31 (December 29, 1909): 11, 15.
- <sup>46</sup>BE 31 (July 7, 1909): 13.
- <sup>47</sup>BE 31 (September 29, 1909): 14.
- <sup>48</sup>BE 31 (November 3, 1909): 13.
- <sup>49</sup>BE 31 (January 6, 1909): 13.
- <sup>50</sup>BE 31 (January 27, 1909): 8.
- <sup>51</sup>BE 31 (February 10, 1909): 6.
- <sup>52</sup>BE 31 (March 10, 1909): 8, 14.
- <sup>53</sup>BE 31 (March 24, 1909): 16.
- <sup>54</sup>BE 31 (June 23, 1909): 8.
- <sup>55</sup>BE 31 (September 22, 1909): 8.
- <sup>56</sup>BE 31 (August 25, 1909): 15; BE 31 (November 10, 1909): 12.
- <sup>57</sup>BE 31 (December 8, 1909): 16.
- <sup>58</sup>BE 31 (January 13, 1909): 6.
- <sup>59</sup>BE 31 (August 25, 1909): 8.
- <sup>60</sup>BE 31 (September 29, 1909): 16.
- <sup>61</sup>BE 31 (December 1, 1909): 4-5.
- <sup>62</sup>See Flora, "Brethren Women in Ministry," pp. 23-24.
- <sup>63</sup>BE 31 (January 6, 1909): 16.
- <sup>64</sup>See also Flora, "Brethren Women in Ministry," p. 24.
- <sup>65</sup>BE 31 (May 5, 1909): 12.
- <sup>66</sup>BE 31 (June 16, 1909): 7.
- <sup>67</sup>BE 31 (July 28, 1909): 14.
- <sup>68</sup>BE 31 (October 6, 1909): 11.
- <sup>69</sup>BE 31 (October 13, 1909): 8, 14; BE 31 (November 10, 1909): 14; BE 31 (December 8, 1909): 8.
- <sup>70</sup>BE 31 (March 17, 1909): 17.
- <sup>71</sup>BE 31 (June 2, 1909): 12.
- <sup>72</sup>BE 31 (August 11, 1909): 8.
- <sup>73</sup>BE 31 (October 27, 1909): 10.
- <sup>74</sup>BE 31 (February 24, 1909): 8.
- <sup>75</sup>BE 31 (February 10, 1909): 15.
- <sup>76</sup>BE 31 (June 2, 1909): 12.
- <sup>77</sup>BE 31 (July 7, 1909): 8.
- <sup>78</sup>BE 31 (September 15, 1909): 9.
- <sup>79</sup>BE 31 (February 3, 1909): 14.
- <sup>80</sup>BE 31 (March 10, 1909): 14.
- <sup>81</sup>BE 31 (August 11, 1909): 15.
- <sup>82</sup>BE 31 (May 12, 1909): 6.
- <sup>83</sup>Stoffer, "Background and Development," pp. 683-84.
- <sup>84</sup>BE 51 (August 24, 1929): 12.
- <sup>85</sup>BE 44 (June 21, 1922): 10.

- <sup>86</sup>BE 46 (February 6, 1924): 8-9.
- <sup>87</sup>BE 46 (November 19, 1924): 13.
- <sup>88</sup>BE 46 (February 27, 1924): 13.
- <sup>89</sup>BE 46 (April 16, 1924): 14.
- <sup>90</sup>BE 46 (April 23, 1924): 13.
- <sup>91</sup>BE 46 (October 8, 1924): 13.
- <sup>92</sup>BE 46 (December 10, 1924): 15.
- <sup>93</sup>BE 46 (August 13, 1924): 16.
- <sup>94</sup>Stoffer, "Background and Development," p. 684.
- <sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 680-739. See also his article "The Brethren Church 1883-1983," BE 105 (August 1983): 16-17.
- <sup>96</sup>BE 61 (May 6, 1939): 12, 18-19.
- <sup>97</sup>BE 61 (June 3, 1939): 7-8.
- <sup>98</sup>BE 61 (February 11, 1939): 9.
- <sup>99</sup>BE 61 (March 4, 1939): 15.
- <sup>100</sup>BE 61 (August 19, 1939): 13.
- <sup>101</sup>BE 61 (April 1, 1939): 9-10.
- <sup>102</sup>BE 61 (June 3, 1939): 13.
- <sup>103</sup>Stoffer, "Background and Development," p. 744. For a careful analysis of the division in its sociological as well as historical, philosophical, and theological aspects, see Dennis Martin, "Ashland College versus Ashland Seminary (1921-37): Prelude to Schism," *Brethren Life and Thought* 21 (Winter 1976): 37-50, and "What Has Divided the Brethren Church," *Brethren Life and Thought* 21 (Spring 1976): 107-119.
- <sup>104</sup>BE 76 (June 19, 1954): 10.
- <sup>105</sup>BE 76 (September 19, 1953): 15.
- <sup>106</sup>BE 76 (July 10, 1954): 4-6, 8-9.
- <sup>107</sup>Stoffer, "Background and Development," p. 744.
- <sup>108</sup>BE 91 (January 18, 1969): 13-16.
- <sup>109</sup>Stoffer, "Background and Development," p. 744.
- <sup>110</sup>*The Brethren Annual*, 1974, p. 26.
- <sup>111</sup>The first was probably Susan White [Hyland], "The Sisters of the Brethren: The Traditional Role of Women in the Brethren Church," 1977.
- <sup>112</sup>Anne Black, the wife of Rev. E. J. Black, was ordained at Muncie, Indiana, in 1957. Two years later she and her husband withdrew from the denomination.
- <sup>113</sup>Jennifer Ray, "Reflections by a Woman in Ministry," unpublished paper for the 1983 Brethren Pastors' Conference on Faith and Order.
- <sup>114</sup>In addition to the items cited above in nn. 3 and 113, the following papers were discussed: P. Kent Bennett, "Ordination of Christian Pastors"; Gene A. Eckerley, "The Role of Women in Relation to Ordination"; David Kerner, "Leadership Selection Models Major Study: Ordination"; Terry L. Lodico, "The Role of Women in the Leadership of the Church"; and Jack L. Oxenrider, "The New Testament Practice of Women in Ministry."
- <sup>115</sup>Homer A. Kent, Sr., *Conquering Frontiers: A History of the Brethren Church (The National Fellowship of Brethren Churches)*, rev. ed. (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1972), p. 121.
- <sup>116</sup>There are many details in successive volumes of *The Brethren Evangelist* to warrant investigating this idea.
- <sup>117</sup>See the research summarized in the articles by Martin, cited above, n. 103 (especially p. 38), and Stoffer, "Background and Development," p. 532 (especially n. 24).
- <sup>118</sup>For a general analysis, see George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism*



1870-1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

<sup>119</sup>Cf., for example, Richard V. Pierard, "The Great Eclipse: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Evangelical Activism," *Eternity* (February 1984): 16-19.

<sup>120</sup>A good introduction will be found in Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering An Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

# WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

by Ben Witherington, III

Jesus, we have been told in recent times, was a "radical feminist." He was one who deliberately undermined the traditional patriarchal framework so obviously a part of Old Testament culture and religion. His own teaching and way of life were such that, according to the contention of many, only an egalitarian view of husband-wife relationships and an equalitarian view of male-female roles as disciples comport with his world view. This particular kind of analysis of Jesus' views on women has become increasingly accepted as the "correct" interpretation of the relevant material in the four Gospels, both in scholarly and in lay circles. Perhaps, however, it might be worthwhile to ask whether or not this is yet another attempt to recreate Jesus and His views in the image of our own modern concerns about the place of women in the Christian community.

So often we come to the Biblical text with an agenda, and it is not surprising that we often find what we are looking for! We use the evidence in a way that partially clarifies and partially obscures the truth. Then too, so often our presuppositions about the text, our ways of handling it, dictate what sort of results we harvest. Methodology, as Robert Funk once said, is not an indifferent net. It catches what it is intended to catch.

In relation to the question of women in the ministry of Jesus, the only way around the problems of reading an agenda into the text, is by careful, comprehensive, historical study of the relevant material. We should not presume to know what the text means *for us*, before we first examine what it meant to its author and audience in its original historical setting. Quite clearly, the text cannot mean something now that is contrary to what the author intended for it to mean *then*. With these thoughts in mind, let us consider some of the relevant material, bearing in mind that I can only summarize some of the material found in my monograph, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom, an event which had implications for women, but he did not directly address the question, what is the proper place of women in that Kingdom, His community of believers. Nevertheless, the implications are fascinating. Take for instance the material found in Mt 19.10-12 where Jesus proclaims a place for the single person in His Kingdom. This might not at first glance seem to be a very radical concept until we see it in its historical context. The Jewish teachers of Jesus' day believed

Gen 1.28 commanded that all able-bodied persons must marry and procreate. To remain single by choice was not a legitimate option. Indeed, frequently the rabbis viewed "eunuchs" as an affront to God. By contrast, Jesus taught that it was legitimate to remain single for the sake of His Kingdom. This text may be Jesus' justification for why He Himself remained single. This teaching had a profound effect on women in Jesus' ministry. It meant that they had the option to be something other than wife or mother in this life. Here then we see a radical departure from Judaism, for in Judaism a woman's place was said to be exclusively in the home in some manner. She had no possibility of being the disciple of a famous rabbi or being trained to lead synagogue worship, much less to serve in the Temple as a priest.

In Lk 10.38-42 we find out how Jesus felt about such Jewish attitudes. Here quite clearly we see a study in contrasts. Martha takes on the role of the traditional Jewish hostess, while Mary represents the attentive disciple. The phrase, "sit at the feet of" (10.39) is used often as a technical phrase meaning to be a disciple of, and probably it has that meaning here. When Martha becomes irritated with Mary's failure to help in the kitchen, and even berates Jesus for not doing something about it, the story takes a rather surprising turn. Jesus does not relegate Mary to the hospitality committee, but rather suggests that Mary has chosen the good portion which will not be taken from her. She has a right, indeed a higher obligation, to be Jesus' disciple rather than to be His hostess. This, of course, is in line with Jesus' teaching elsewhere that nothing has a greater priority than taking up one's cross and following Jesus, but its application to women would have been seen as decidedly unacceptable in Jewish circles.

From Lk 8.1-3 we know that women were amongst Jesus' traveling entourage, a fact in itself which would have been considered scandalous since they were probably not the wives of His disciples. It is likely that Jesus was called the "friend of sinners" in a derisive way precisely because He gave women and other disenfranchised groups free and equal access to His community. In Lk 8.1-3 we also notice that these women appear to have been carrying out functions in the community later assumed by deacons and deaconesses — providing for the material needs and well-being of the community:

It is hard to overestimate the importance of Jesus' teaching about the family of faith *vis-a-vis* the physical family. Clearly, from such texts as Mk 3.31-35 and parallels, Jesus saw faith not heredity as the basis for claiming a place in His community. Indeed Mk 3.21ff. (cf. Jn 7.5) suggests that physical ties to Jesus might indeed be a stumbling block to understanding Him. Further, such

texts as Mk 10.29-30, Lk 12.49-53 and parallels, Lk 9.57-62 make clear that for Jesus it was the family of faith, not the physical family, that must be seen as the basic relational unit within the Kingdom. To be sure, if a physical family (such as Mary, Martha, and Lazarus) was Christian, then the physical family and family of faith could stand together. But if the physical family was divided over loyalty to Jesus, and would not serve but sever the body of believers, then the priority of the family of faith must take precedent. Mk 3.31-35 means nothing less than that one's brothers and sisters in the faith are one's *primary* family to whom one must give *primary* allegiance. If an either/or situation arose, it is clear where Jesus' loyalties were, and where he expected His disciples to be. This attitude, in a lesser degree, is found amongst rabbis and their disciples where it was sometimes affirmed that a student owed his first allegiance to his teacher "who brought him into the world to come" over his parents "who brought him into the world." However, Jesus applied this principle in a more radical and thorough way (cf. Lk 11.27-28, 12.49-53). The Church has still not integrated all that this implies for our relationships in Christ.

Incidental evidence of Jesus' view of the value of a woman's word of witness about Him is found in John 4. The story of the woman at the well is too well known to bear repeating, but several things about this story indicate Jesus' attitude toward women. Firstly, Jewish teachers insisted that Jewish men should speak little or not at all with women, especially strange women, in public places. This was all the more so in regard to women of "ill repute" or of "foreign extraction." Samaritan women were regarded by rabbis as "menstruants from the womb", i.e., always unclean, untouchable, outcasts. Thus, in the disciples' eyes, Jesus had no business talking with this woman at the well. Jesus, however, not only speaks to her but refuses to treat her as unclean, engaging her in one of the most significant theological discussions in the whole of the Fourth Gospel. This implies that even such a woman as she was a proper recipient of theological information and indeed a proper candidate for discipleship. Secondly, the Fourth Evangelist stresses that while Jesus' male disciples were busy scurrying for the food that does not satisfy, this woman went to proclaim the message that led many to come hear from Jesus of a food that offers eternal life (4.39). It may well be that the parable in 4.37-38 is intended to imply that the woman is one of the sowers or reapers. The Samaritan woman then is seen by the Fourth Evangelist as one who properly models the role of disciple — to the shame of the Twelve. Of a similar nature, though more explicit, is Jesus' commissioning of Mary Magdalene to be an "apostle to the Apostles" by being the first witness to the Resurrection (Jn 20.17-18).



It is also singularly significant that Jesus tactily rejects the Old Testament laws of clean and unclean as binding on Himself and His followers. Thus, He does not treat the touching of a corpse (Lk 7.15), the touch of a sinner woman (Lk 7.36ff.), or a woman with a flow of blood (Mk 5.27ff) as defiling. Indeed Mk 7.1ff. states explicitly that Jesus declared all foods clean (7.19b) on the basis of the principle that it is only what comes out of a person that can defile them, not what enters them or touches them (7.15).

One further text that has bearing on women, in both their relationships to the physical family and the family of faith is Lk 22.24-30. Here Jesus defines what sort of leadership or headship the twelve are to exercise over His followers. He explains that they are not to be like the Gentiles who lord it over people, rather they are to follow Jesus' example and be servants of all. Clearly, headship for Jesus means being a head servant — it requires increased responsibility not increased privilege. This is not to say that they cannot have or exercise authority to teach, to preach, to heal. What it does mean is that the traditional patriarchal model of headship must be reformed in the Kingdom. Jesus' choice of and commission of the Twelve men both before and after His resurrection makes quite clear that Jesus was concerned about reformation, not rejection of the traditional concept of headship. Whatever this concept now meant in the Kingdom, however, it obviously was not taken by the Evangelists to mean that women could not proclaim the Good News (Jn 20.17-18) or even teach male church figures of significance (Ac 18.24-26).

What we have said to this point in the discussion is only one side of the story. The other side tells of Jesus' concern to strengthen the traditional physical family structure making it more equitable for women. Jesus' teaching on marriage, family, and divorce illustrate this fact. For instance, in Mt 5.27ff., Jesus clearly intensifies the prohibition against adultery. It was to include even the inclination of the heart, not just the deeds of the body. Further, in Matthew 19 (cf. Mark 10) Jesus takes a very strict stand on divorce. Indeed many scholars would suggest that His view is "no divorce," unless the marriage was improper in the first place (e.g., in the case of an incestuous union). That Jesus took a strict stand against divorce is strongly suggested by the disciples response in Mt 19.10. They knew well enough that some rabbis had said no divorce except on grounds of adultery. It is doubtful that the disciples would have responded as they did if they had understood Jesus to be simply siding with one side of the traditional Jewish debate. Then too, Mark's and Luke's Gospels record no acceptable grounds for divorce. Certainly, the first audiences who received these Gospels would have understood that Jesus taught "no divorce." Divorce for

Jesus is adultery, as is remarriage, because in God's eyes when the two are joined by God that union is indissoluble except presumably by death (Mt 19.9, Mk 10.11-12, Lk 16.18). In Mt 19.8-9, Jesus contrasts His position with that of Moses. Moses allowed divorce for hardness of heart, but Jesus now insisted that God's original creation order and intention should be upheld because He is bringing in the new creation. Now, however difficult or controversial this teaching might be, its general effect for women was to give them much greater security in their role as a wife. Some rabbis had even said that if a man found a woman fairer than his own, or if his present wife burnt the breakfast, he was free to divorce and remarry. Not so in the community of Jesus. Women could be sure that no such whim could be grounds for divorce in the Christian community. Thus, even if Mt 19.9 (5.32) allows for divorce on grounds of adultery (which seems unlikely), Jesus had significantly curtailed male freedom to divorce (only males could divorce in first century Jewish culture).

Jn 7.53-8.11 also illustrates that Jesus did not tolerate a double standard. Here the question to be raised is, where is the adulterer who was also caught in the act? Obviously these Jewish elders took more seriously the woman's sin than the man's in this case. Jesus was having no part in such a selective and prejudicial procedure of justice. He does not ignore the woman's sin, but neither does he condemn her. His real condemnation falls on a system that discriminates against the "weaker" members of society. Later, he rails against the scribes who are bilking helpless widows of what little estate they had (Mk 12.40 and parallels). Jesus also felt strongly about elderly parents being disenfranchised by their own children under the pretence of godliness (Mk. 7.9-13). We know too that children held a special place in Jesus' ministry. He insisted on their right to come to Him despite the disciples' resistance (Mk 10.13ff).

Jesus' compassion on women with lost loved ones (Lk 7.11ff., John 11), sick loved ones (Mk 7.24ff.), or special problems (Lk 8.1-3). His fellowship with them (John 12, Luke 10), and their loyalty to Him to the bitter end (even beyond that of the Twelve) bespeaks of a special relationship between Jesus and those who might have been treated by some male disciples as the least of the disciples whose word could not even be trusted (Lk 24.11). All of this suggests a very remarkable upgrading of the roles women could assume in Jesus' community as compared to their attenuated place in Judaism where they were not allowed to read Torah in the synagogue or to be members of the governing quorum because of their monthly uncleanness.

Our study of Jesus' words and deeds leads us to conclude that in

many, though not all, regards, Jesus differed from His Jewish contemporaries. This is all the more remarkable when we note that Jesus, so far as we know, never left His immediate Jewish environment for any length of time and, more importantly, directed His mission specifically to His fellow Jews.

Jesus' rejection of divorce outright would have offended practically everyone of His day. Further, Jesus' view that the single state was a legitimate and not abnormal calling for those to whom it was given, went against prevailing views in various parts of the Roman Empire about a man's duty to marry and procreate, but nowhere more so than in His native Palestine. I suggested that it was this teaching which made it possible for women also to assume roles other than those of wife and mother in Jesus' community. That Jesus did not endorse various ways of making women "scapegoats," especially in sexual matters, placed Him at odds with other rabbis, though doubtless even many Gentiles would have thought that Jesus' rejection of the "double standard" was taking equality too far. Further, we do not find negative remarks about the nature, abilities and religious potential of women in comparison to men on the lips of Jesus in contrast to various Jewish authors. There is also reason to believe that Jesus' estimation of the worth and validity of a woman's word of testimony was higher than that of most, if not all, of His contemporaries (cf. Jn 4.27-42). Jesus' teaching that the family of faith's claims took priority over the claims of the physical family on both men and women (cf. Mk 3.31-5, 10.29-30), also led to some circumstances that both Jew and Gentile would have found objectionable; for instance, what husband (Jew or Gentile) would willingly have let his wife leave home and family to become a follower of an itinerant Jewish preacher? Yet Lk 8.3 probably indicates that Joanna, the wife of Chuza, had done this. This teaching, however, did not lead Jesus to repudiate either the traditional family structure outright or, it would seem, the patriarchal framework which existed to one degree or another in all the various Mediterranean cultures of that day. Jesus' teaching on the matter of corban, on honouring parents, on divorce, and on children makes clear that He was not advocating a rejection of the traditional family structure. If Mt 5.27-32 and Jn 7.53-8.11 are any indication, then Jesus reaffirmed the responsibility of the husband and male leaders to be moral examples for the community. Jesus' choice of twelve men to be leaders of His new community also leads one to think that He was attempting to reform, not reject, the patriarchal framework under which He operated.

Certain of Jesus' words and deeds, such as His teaching on the laws of uncleanness, His healing of a woman on the Sabbath, and His willingness to converse with a strange woman in public, while



obviously offensive to His fellow Jews, would probably not have raised many eyebrows outside Jesus' native context. Then, too, Jesus' attitude toward a woman's right to religious training and to be a disciple of a religious leader, while no doubt shocking to Jews, would not have seemed radical to many Romans or Greeks of that day.

Jesus' views of women and their roles do not fit neatly into any of the categories of His day. He was not a Qumranite, nor was he a traditional rabbi in these matters, though he had certain things in common with both groups. His use of women, both fictitious and real, as examples of faith for His followers, and His teaching on honoring parents, is not without precedent in rabbinic literature. His calling of men and women to radical commitment to God, in view of the inbreaking of the Kingdom, has certain affinities with the teachings of both John the Baptist and Qumran. Yet, on the whole, and especially in view of His Jewish context, Jesus appears to be a unique and sometimes radical reformer of the views of women and their roles that were commonly held among His people. Further, it appears that the case for new and more open attitudes toward women had still to be argued when the Evangelists wrote their Gospels. Perhaps this is the very reason why the Third and Fourth Evangelists take pains to present various women as religious models for their audiences. What then was the effect of these new attitudes about women and their roles on the women who participated in the community of Jesus? What was the community of Jesus offering women in terms of status and roles in comparison to what was offered them in Judaism?

To begin with, it is apparent, not only in the Gospels but also in Acts and the Epistles (e.g., Romans 16), that the impact of the Christian message on women was considerable. It is probable that Jesus' teachings attracted women in part because of the new roles and equal status they were granted in the Christian community. There were many cults in Greece and Rome that were for men only or, at best, allowed women to participate in very limited ways. Further, it is easy to see why women who were on the fringe of the synagogue community became Christian converts. Judaism offered women proselytes a circumscribed place at best, for they were faced with the rabbinic restrictions that limited their participation in religious functions. While women were able neither to make up the quorum necessary to found a synagogue, nor to receive the Jewish covenant sign, these limitations did not exist in the Christian community. The necessary and sufficient explanation of why Christianity differed from its religious mother, Judaism, in these matters is that Jesus broke with both biblical and rabbinic traditions that restricted women's roles in religious practices, and that He rejected



attempts to devalue the worth of a woman, or her word of witness. Thus, the community of Jesus, both before and after Easter, granted women *together* with men (not segregated from men as in some pagan cults) an equal right to participate fully in the family of faith. This was a right that women did not have in contemporary Judaism or in many pagan cults. Jesus' teachings on the priorities of discipleship, His willingness to accept women as His disciples and travelling companions (cf. Lk 8.1-3, 10.38-42), and His teaching on eunuchs and what defiled a person, effectively paved the way for women to play a vital part in His community. *Anyone* could have faith in and follow Jesus — He did not insist on any other requirements for entrance into His family of faith.

In regard to the roles women could and did assume in Jesus' community, Luke particularly shows us that a variety of tasks were assumed by women, especially in the post-Easter community. The Third Evangelist gives evidence (cf. Lk 8.3, Ac 9.36-42) that women often enough simply resumed their traditional roles of providing hospitality or material support, though now it was in service to the community of Jesus. Such roles were acceptable so long as they did not hinder a woman from choosing or learning more about the "one thing needful" (Lk 10.38-42).

While the teaching and community of Jesus was perhaps more easily and more naturally embraced by Gentile women than by Jewish women, it offered Jewish women more in terms of status and roles than it did to Gentile women. For a Jewish woman, the possibility of being a disciple of a great teacher, of being a travelling follower of Jesus, of remaining single "for the sake of the Kingdom," or even of being a teacher of the faith to persons other than children, were all opportunities that did not exist prior to her entrance into the community of Jesus. Nonetheless, the Christian faith and community offered Gentile women a great deal also. As well as the roles mentioned above, the offer of salvation from sin, of starting life with a new self-image and purpose, of actively participating in a community whose Master had directed His mission especially to the oppressed, were offers that appealed greatly to Gentile, as well as Jewish, women. This new status and these new roles, some of which had not been available to these women before, are factors which explain the influx of women into the community of Jesus.

Another motif that comes to light in the Gospels is the presentation of women as valid witnesses of the truth about Jesus (John 4 for instance), and especially about His death, burial, empty tomb and appearance as the risen Lord. Though it may have been a matter of necessity, it is significant that a crucial part of the Christian kerygma is based on the testimony of Jesus' female followers. It is

to the credit of the Evangelists that, far from trying to gloss over this fact, it is highlighted in different ways by the First Evangelist, Luke, the Fourth Evangelist, and probably Mark. Worthy of special mention is Luke's way of revealing the validity of the testimony of Jesus' female followers by showing that it was confirmed by the Apostle Peter (cf. Lk 24.1-10, 12). Also notable is the Fourth Evangelist's presentation of Martha's confession as, to some extent, a model for his audience (cf. Jn 11.27, 20.31). Furthermore the Resurrection narratives, like other portions of the Gospels, tend to bear witness to the effect of Jesus' attitudes toward women on the Christian community, as women appear in these narratives as well as elsewhere as witnesses and participants in that community.

There is not time or space to explore this material further. Suffice it to say that Jesus was about the business of doing two things at once in His Ministry that dramatically affected women. On the one hand, He allowed women to have a significant place and status in His words, deeds, and ministry while combatting prejudice and double-standards. The effect of this was to give Jewish women especially new religious rights and functions in the family of faith. On the other hand, he took actions that strengthened women's traditional roles in the family. Thus, the new dichotomy of either Jesus as a "feminist" or Jesus as a traditionalist must be rejected. Neither term and neither extreme adequately describes Jesus' relationship with women. As in so many other regards, Jesus' ministry to and with women defies simple categorization. We would do well today to try and preserve the healthy balance enunciated by Jesus and perpetuated by Paul. When the Church ignores either the new thing Jesus began or the old things he reaffirmed, it stands in danger of further fragmenting the physical family or quenching the Spirit working in the lives of the women of God. May God preserve us from both these fates.

## TWO SEMINARIES OR ONE: A PLEA FOR A BLACK-WHITE DIALOGUE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

by William H. Myers

### Monologue in Politics

The recent Democratic National Convention was a perfect illustration of the lack of black-white dialogue in politics. Jesse Jackson did not succeed in his objective, irrespective of the media claims to the contrary. Yes, he made us all feel proud and he made history. But, was that his primary objective or even a secondary objective? It is highly unlikely when one considers this trained seminarian's background.

Jesse and those blacks who voted for him sought dialogue, not history or a proud feeling. When blacks all over this nation voted for Jesse it was not a repudiation of Hart or Mondale. Implicit in this vote was a repudiation of monologue. It was not so much a vote against Mondale (a black favorite) as much as a vote for genuine dialogue. The message was clear. We desire choices that allow fruitful black-white dialogue. Since past history demonstrates the white penchant for monologue on political matters that affect blacks, we chose on this occasion to send a dialogic messenger who carried a dialogic message. No black person expected that his vote would catapult Jesse into the "White" House. However, his vote was viewed as a demand to be heard and a plea for black-white dialogue in politics.

This is why, unfortunately, both Andrew Young and Coretta King were booed by black delegates. At the minimum the delegates went to the convention with the hope of receiving a message that a black-white dialogue would occur, and they would not hear anyone who would suggest that they should forfeit that right yet again in silence and acquiescence. Sadly, Jesse left in the same state in which he came (as it relates to the objective) — with a white monologue on politics.

There was obvious dialogue between the Democratic party and Gary Hart, the South and women. But in Jesse's case the monologue continued in response to each issue he raised: "Do it our way and your turn will come down the road!" Obviously, the Democratic party felt that the female vote was crucial and non-sacrificial, for women could turn to the Republicans in 1980. But, to whom could the black race turn to? In effect the Democrats perception was that blacks have no acceptable line of default and therefore Jesse was sacrificial.

This, as I see it, is a classic "political" example of how the Democrats failed to seize the opportunity for black-white dialogue. The gender move sought to mitigate it, but it was more avoidance than mitigation.<sup>1</sup>

Although this occurrence on the political scene is disturbing, there is a similar matter that is even more disconcerting. This same black-white dichotomy permeates the Church in the area of theological education. As Christians we expect to see many things occurring in the world, but how is it so easy for us to accept them in the Church?<sup>2</sup> More specifically, I speak of a white monologue and the failure to incorporate a black-white dialogue within the theological education system.

### Dichotomies in Church History

The black-white division is not the first dichotomy that the Church has faced in its history. During the apostolic period there was the Jew-Gentile dichotomy. Paul's sensitivities and spirit were heightened to the point that he was able to see that it was the death knell to the Christian Church. The allowance of a Jewish Church and a Gentile Church was to admit to no Christian Church at all.<sup>3</sup> We are all very familiar with how Paul stood resolutely at the Jerusalem Council and on other occasions on behalf of the Gentiles and in favor of one Church, not two.

Paul stood face-to-face with the "pillars of the church" in active dialogue and declared to them that their theology and their conduct was wrong if they accepted this divisive dichotomy. He did not sit in "silence" nor look the other way (thereby condoning their attitude by default). When it became necessary he even faced the titular "pillar" regarding his own conduct on the matter.<sup>4</sup>

A second divisive factor has been that of the *kleros-laos* (clergy-laity) controversy.<sup>5</sup> A careful study of this dichotomy suggests that the separation of these two terms was introduced first by Clement of Rome in A.D. 95<sup>6</sup> The chasm widened until the "high water mark" of the Reformation period closed it with the concept of the "priesthood of all believers." Since that time there has been frequent nominal attempts at closing the gap such that at present we have a great emphasis on the ministry of all the people of God (*laos*) which seeks to eliminate this particular dichotomy in the Church. The movement seeks to do this by placing the emphasis in this controversy where it belongs. That is, on the gifted's ability to function, not on office or status.<sup>7</sup>

Other dichotomies are the Protestant-Catholic and conservative-liberal splits. However, let me suggest that these have led to a most prominent dichotomy today in the conservative ranks of the Christian family. It is the "true" evangelical versus the quasi-



evangelical dichotomy.<sup>8</sup> It can be observed today in a most heated fashion on such issues as inspiration and inerrancy, the historical-critical method and hermeneutical methods, techniques, and presuppositions.<sup>9</sup> At the core of much of this controversy is the criteria for bearing the tag of "evangelical."

### **Monologue in the Theological Education System**

My concern at present is with the failure of the theological academic community (seminaries, accrediting associations, etc.) in general to enter into sincere black-white dialogue regarding the structure of theological education. As a result I have observed an increasing attitude that is building toward two seminaries instead of one. Isn't it enough that we must have black churches and white churches, Catholic churches and Protestant churches, Penecostals and Reformed, Methodist and Baptists that ignore one another? Must we continue to compound the problem of separatism? Shall we become even more divisive by forcing this matter to its ultimate dichotomous conclusion? Or shall we seize the opportunity to make a giant leap forward by entering into a truly participative black-white dialogue?

There are many black pastors, ministers and laymen today seeking theological training on a seminary or near-seminary level, but are not receiving it because they perceive the white seminary as unwilling to include them in the process which determines method, technique and structure that includes their unique contextual situation.<sup>10</sup> Therefore many are pressing for their own black community seminaries. My Doctor of Ministry dissertation and research (which includes the development of such a center) documents how prevalent this type of center is for black and whites of all denominations and how the driving force behind it is more laymen than clergy.<sup>11</sup> It also suggests, however, how few theological seminaries were involved in providing this type of service in the first place, thereby forcing these types of centers to fill the gap. It also demonstrates how theological seminary systems contribute to this black-white dichotomy either actively or by default.<sup>12</sup>

### **Is there a way out?**

On this subject I feel compelled to go my own way, in spite of the opinions of black theologians, many who will certainly disagree with me but whose opinions I value nonetheless. I don't consider Black Studies courses or Black Studies programs as the answer.<sup>13</sup> This is not to be construed as a repudiation, denigration or questioning of their importance or usefulness. However, it skirts the real issue just as surely as the apostles (except Paul) failed to con-

front Peter ("a pillar of the church").

After all, how many white seminarians will attend courses that are entitled Black \_\_\_\_\_? Shall we then congregate a group of blacks in a class to discuss problems that they are well aware of but unable to solve alone? I choose not to follow some that would make these courses mandatory for whites. This would generate more of a negative response than a cooperative effort in trying to bring about true reconciliation. Our method should be persuasion of the righteousness of this position as supported by the Scriptures which leads to an embracing of this position because they are convinced not forced.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, include Black Theology in Contemporary or Christian Theology, Black Church History in Church History, Black Church Administration in Church Administration and Black Preaching in Homiletics. For in the final analysis there is neither a Black Theology or White Theology but God's Theology; neither is there a Black or White Church History, but the Church's History and so on and so on. What we have is such a diversity of experiences, expressions and unique emphases that when one is left out Theology, Church History, Homiletics are incomplete. Unfortunately, the very necessary emphasis on Black Theology, History and Preaching by black theologians, historians and homileticians resulted as a reaction to the incompleteness of these divisions in the course of study.

If theological education is done as I have outlined above then black and white together are exposed to the *whole* Church and can help to inform each other through their varied experiences. From this comes exposure of the diversity of liturgy, homiletical style and skill, leadership approach, theology and hermeneutical presupposition that exists in the whole Body. The greater the exposure in all divisions of theological study the more we will loosen the dogmatism and ignorance that exist. In this way we can begin to see and appreciate that the learning process is not one-sided. After all, we take this approach with our liberal brothers (at least some of us do) — why not with our black brothers? We might just find out that we can learn something about hermeneutics from the Black Church by discovering that their approach to interpretation of the Scriptures is not as simplistic as the terms "fundamentals" and "literal" imply.

To enhance this experience the classroom instructor might bring in practitioners in these areas of specialty and/or accomplish it through reading and research assignments. The complaint of many blacks is that either it is not included at all or that it is so watered down that it fails to appreciate the black differences on an equal basis.<sup>15</sup>

The failure to implement such a structure is quite evident in the ethnocentric attitudes and unChristian conduct of many white

seminarians toward their black counterparts in class. Unfortunately, they are often unaware of just how overt and obvious their actions are. A slight elbow, a fixation with a remote object, casual conversation while others speak, and utter disgust on their face with the black that has been adjudged below the white's standards are but a few of their obvious mannerisms. Blacks are quite sensitized to these mannerisms after more than 200 years of it in all other sectors of life. It is lamentable that it should be seen in the highest educational institution of the Church. It is even more lamentable that it is to be seen in the very actions of those being trained to go out as "change agents" among those who act this way as a normal and accepted way of life. One has to wonder what kind of changes will take place and what the seminarian's actions or silence will convey to those whom they will lead? For a most prevalent foundational basis for perpetuation of black-white division is ignorance which is often due to silence and distortion.

Now that I have addressed curriculum, the matter of context needs to be approached. In our academic realm there is frequently talk about forcing the student to seminary campuses so that he might be introduced to the spiritual atmosphere of campus life. One might ask just what kind of superior enhancement exists in mandates that trickle down from "on high" by those who have little knowledge of or sensitivity to the real world of many seminary student bodies? What kind of spiritual enhancement occurs in one locale over another especially when it fails to take into consideration the differences of black seminarians? What about bi-vocational pastors, heavy pastoral responsibilities, cost, travel time and mixture of student body? How do these considerations measure against an unproven spiritual enhancement on some remote predominantly white campus engendered by the insensitive dictates of some body who is not in touch with the real world of ministry? Who needs the most exposure to the other's milieu and mores? Is it the black who has been introduced to the white dominated structures in all sectors of our society all of his life in a predominantly monologic manner? Or is it the white who has very rarely been introduced to the problems, manner of thinking and mores of the black structure in a dialogic theological setting?<sup>16</sup>

It is usually at this point that the concepts of "evangelistic mission" and "pastoral concern" are invoked. It is insisted that ministers are proclaimer's of the word and are to be concerned with taking care of their congregations. Certainly, this is true, but it is only part of the truth. One might ask what happened to the "prophetic word" and what happened to the exhortations to the congregation about unChristian conduct and attitudes as a part of pastoral concerns and care?<sup>17</sup>



## Two Seminaries or One

We must ask whether it is just our curriculum that makes our education system different than the secular system? Shall we project the same image as that of our counterparts in secular higher educational institutions? Or, is it our mission that sets us apart, because we view it as ministry? Hopefully, we will reject any "ivory tower theology" and any abstract pedagogical structure that is so implacable it fails to be relevant to the needs of those we serve. Herein lies the key. Whom do we serve and how well are we serving Him and them? When we cease to see our seminaries as a calling to a *ministerium dei* for the *matheton theou* we cease to be anything different than a secular educational institution.

This must as a prerequisite require an ongoing flexibility in our structure that allows for modifications that will help us meet the needs of those that are left out because of inflexible and introverted structures. Jesus never created a structure nor failed to condemn any approach that was so rigid in its religiosity (attitude, action, method, system or structure) that it excluded those in need.<sup>18</sup> This should be especially true for those who find themselves left out, struggling or near drowning through a tremendous historical burden which consists of a mixture of economic, social, educational or ministerial deprivation through no fault of their own. Forced to run in the sand for decades while their counterparts ran on cinder they are suddenly thrust upon the cinder track and told to run equally with their counterparts. When a rare few adapt quickly enough to run just as fast, it becomes justification for leaving the masses behind.

Now, I must not lay an unequal share of the blame on the seminaries without placing due blame at the doorsteps of administrators of accrediting associations and denominational headquarters. Some of these people remain quite remote from the real world of practical ministry and are quite unconcerned with the contextual problems facing pastors attending seminary. The inflexibility in their structures as they sit in their ivory towers setting up "straw men" (i.e. quality education) to hide behind while failing to consider equally important contextual needs has contributed directly to the failure of many seminaries in fulfilling their mission.

It is this seemingly intransigent catch 22 (rigidity of accrediting associations and the accredited seminaries's desire to maintain accreditation)<sup>19</sup> that has caused many black theologians, pastors, educators and laymen to suggest that the only solution is two seminaries. From my perspective the two seminary concept takes on more than one form. It can be full-fledged seminaries like Morehouse, Virginia Union and I.T.C., or Black Studies programs



in white seminaries that are predominantly black attended, or black community centers, institutes, or church programs. The message being sent by all of these is that we need something of our own because we have been left out. History has shown the proponents of this view that a black-white dialogue that is totally open, sensitive and leads to effective action is highly unlikely. The Church is just as slow in making racial adjustments as the world is on other economic, social, educational and political matters.

What I find the most disturbing is the obvious silence<sup>20</sup> and uneasiness of white theologians, practitioners and seminarians to talk about it. James D. Smart wrote a book nearly 15 years ago entitled *The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church* which is a study in hermeneutics. I find a peculiarly enigmatic silence on racial attitudes in the church and seminaries today. And, if it is not addressed by the Body of Christ and in the church, then where will it be addressed? Is this uneasiness and silence due to unfamiliarity? Or, unconcern? Or, agreement? Or, fear of offending the "pillars" of the church? There is no such uneasiness or silence among this same group when different opinions on biblical authority, inerrancy, or historial-critical method are posited. There is ample dialogue on these issues, but the silence on black-white issues is similar to that of the world. If we are silent long enough *maybe* the problem will go away or the other side will stop talking about it. Another approach is the insistence that we have come a long way and made a lot of progress. "Your turn is coming!"

It is this type of attitude towards the issue that creates the greatest amount of outrage from a black perspective. It is because I know that few *really* want to hear what I am saying here that pains me the most in writing this article. The fact that it will fall on mostly deaf ears in the Body of Christ that cherishes so dearly the term "prophetic" is an indescribable lament. The cry is always "don't rock the boat" (e.g. criticize the structure or system) or you will slow down the progress.

Unfortunately, being put off is no longer acceptable to many. My fear is that we are headed in the direction of two seminaries and, without question, both sides will be the losers. There is, however, too much intransigence on the white side and too great a need on the black side which is pressing us inexorably in that direction. Unless rhetoric ceases and a fruitful black-white dialogue occurs it is already a *fait accompli*. It is a most lamentable state of affairs for God's chosen masterpiece of reconciliation, unity, care and concern for the needs of others to be projecting such an image in its most vital institution. The Scriptures speak too much about unity and Jesus suffered, bled and died for it. Paul went to jail, suffered immensely and risked losing invaluable friendships with the "pil-

lars of the church." And, Paul wrote some of the most painful as well as lofty letters in support of reconciliation and the *one* true Church, not two. With such a tradition passed on to us how can we allow this division to plague our theological systems? I cannot accept that two seminaries of this nature are better than the one mandated and described in the Scriptures.

This is not to say that certain distinct types of educational institutions are wrong in and of themselves and should cease to exist. We will probably have denominational seminaries until the Lord returns. They are fine as long as they are talking to one another, accepting and informing one another in open dialogue. The freedom of students to cross denominational lines as they choose for broader educational exposure in the Christian family is invaluable.

This is also true of certain types of community training that cannot be done in any other way.<sup>21</sup> But it is when institutions emerge as a result of any group being left out and their needs unmet by those in a position to help that warning signals should be heard. When we fail to enter into dialogue regarding this matter, then we have lost sight of what the ministry of theological education is about.<sup>22</sup> God forbid that we should fail to seize the opportunity for fruitful black-white dialogue on theological education and continue to hamper the Body of Christ through division in our highest and most important educational system.<sup>23</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The party could have addressed both race and gender by choosing someone like Barbara Jordan if they really had concern for both.

<sup>2</sup>James Earl Massey, "The Relational Imperative." *Spectrum* 47 (July, 1971), p. 15 says that "the suffering of Black Americans has caused them to ask why it comes from the very hands of those who have been trustees and guardians of the Christian message. And the Black American's experience also continues to be a living rebuke against theological systems that do not speak to concrete situations of human need."

<sup>3</sup>See especially the Ephesian and Galatian epistles.

<sup>4</sup>Gal. 2:11ff.

<sup>5</sup>Technically, although we often trace our English terms laity and clergy to these two terms, both of them refer to "all of the people of God." Consult the standard lexicons and theological dictionaries for more details.

<sup>6</sup>In I Clement 40:6, Glenn E. Hinson, ed., *Christian Classics: The Early Church Fathers*. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980). Clement of Rome was the first to associate the term laymen with the term LAIKOS instead of LAOS. The classical meaning of LAIKOS is uneducated, inarticulate people whereas LAOS generally has the meaning "people of God" LAIKOS is never used in Scripture. However, Clement's inappropriate association has set this term in history and in many circles it remains intact.

<sup>7</sup>See particularly James Garlow, *Partners in Ministry: Laity and Pastors Working Together*. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1981).

<sup>8</sup>See especially Harold Lindsell's two books *The Battle for the Bible* and *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976 and 1979) which brought this matter to a head.

Cf. the most recent controversy over Robert Gundry's redactional commentary on Matthew in *JETS* Vol. 26, No. 1, March 1983 which is devoted entirely to this controversy.

<sup>9</sup>See for instance Rex A. Koivisto's analysis of Clark Pinnock's position on Scripture and Pinnock's response in *JETS*, June 1981, pp. 139-155.

Cf. the position of ICBI in their latest work *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*. (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1984); *Biblical Errancy: An Analysis of its Philosophical Roots*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981); James M. Boice, ed. *The Foundation of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), with James Barr, *The Scope and Authority of the Bible*, (Westminster, 1981); Paul Achtemeier *The Inspiration of Scripture*, (Westminster, 1979); R.E. Brown, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible* Paulist, 1981); J.B. Rogers and D.K. McKim, ed. *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (Harper & Row, 1979) for the opposing viewpoints, Consider then the position of the centrist C.F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* vol. 4. (Waco: Word, 1979)

<sup>10</sup>Marshall C. Grigsby, "The Black Religious Experience and Theological Education — 1970-1976: A Six-Year Assessment" *Theological Education* 13 (Winter, 1977): 83 feels that more needs to be done to take serious account of the black context and experience.

Andrew White, "The Role of the Black Church in the Liberation Struggle." *Spectrum* 47 (July, 1971), p. 10 is specific in what that context and experience consists of when he says "the experience is one of blunt rejection, economic deprivation, social isolation; being excluded from, omitted from, exploited, by-passed, suppressed, scorned, brutally beaten, shot down, lynched and mistreated in a thousand different ways solely because one is Black."

I hasten to add that the Black pastor has not been excluded from this type of treatment, in fact he even finds it in the seminary and amongst his white counterparts. His burden is not to be overcome by it so that he might be able to help his people to overcome it without losing hope, becoming embittered or responding in a like manner.

<sup>11</sup>Unfortunately, the Black church is generally behind in the "shared ministry" concept because of the unique role played by the Black pastor in the community and church that is a part of our tradition created more or less by this racist society. This must change, for younger generations are no longer willing to accept the leadership styles in the Black church that their parents knew.

Emmanual L. McCall. "Theological Education in the Black Church." *Review and Expositor* 75 (Summer, 1978):418 a Southern Baptist is insightful when he states that "it is necessary to help black pastors understand the validity of a shared ministry with the laity. For some men this will be extremely traumatic since the prevalent role model is the minister who is 'all in all' to his church and community."

<sup>12</sup>For a brief synopsis of how the major denominations have approached blacks regarding Christian education see Grant S. Shockley, "Christian Education and the Black Church: A Contextual Approach." *The Journal of the I.T.C.* 2 (Spring, 1975):75-88. Cf. Alain Rogers, "The African Methodist



Episcopal Church: A Study in Black Nationalism." *The Black Church* 1, No. 1 (1972):17-43 for an A.M.E. biographical account of how blacks were actually forced out of the white church into a separatist church of their own.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Gayraud S. Wilmore, "Tension Points in Black Church Studies." *Christian Century* 96 (April 11, 1979): 411-413 who as one of our most revered Black theologians and pioneers in this area of Black Studies programs and techniques takes a different approach than mine.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, p. 413. Wilmore says "it is my contention that any white seminary graduate who has not had some exposure to the history, theology and praxis of black religions in America . . . is not prepared for ministry in the kind of world we must live in today."

Without question Professor Wilmore's conclusion must receive its fair hearing, but my concern is more with the method or the perception of the techniques used to accomplish this task. It is here where Wilmore and I disagree.

<sup>15</sup>Massey, p. 15 says "no imported system of theology has been relevant to the Black man's life in America."

White, p. 18 adds that even our denominational labels are hand-me-downs. "Protestant denominations among Black people are known as Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Congregational, etc., but none called Black or Negro."

<sup>16</sup>C. Eric Lincoln, "The Black Church in the American Society: A New Responsibility?" *The Journal of the I.T.C.* 6 (Spring, 1979):93 is most insightful when he says "perhaps it was not incidental that when God raised up a man to lead America through the racial crisis that had troubled us for more than a century, He did not turn to the wealth and power, the tradition and experience, the prestige and the glory of the establishment churches in America. *They had their chance, and they had defaulted* (my emphasis). But God raised up a leader from the Black Church. Perhaps God was trying to say something to America in general, and the Black Church in particular. Is anybody listening?"

<sup>17</sup>James A. Sanders, *God Has A Story Too*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) in his prophetic/constitutive hermeneutic paradigm would ask white pastors when was the last time they "afflicted the comfortable" of their congregation on the racial issue. It is this type of preaching that makes the word come alive and relevant to our times. It further answers the charge by liberals that conservatives are a group of self-appointed guardians of a word no longer relevant to our times.

<sup>18</sup>See for example Mark 7:1-13 where Jesus condemned the Pharisees for invoking the claim of Corban (transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning a gift, particularly to God) to escape their responsibility of supporting their parents.

<sup>19</sup>It is this type of stalemate with accrediting associations that have caused many seminaries to reject the accreditation of certain associations.

<sup>20</sup>Wilmore, p. 413 says that "what distresses me is the silence on this subject in most places. Black church studies is doing well enough where it exists. The problem is that in too many of the so-called leading theological schools in the U.S. it simply doesn't exist."

<sup>21</sup>Bishop John Hurst Adams "Education Toward the Entire Church." *Theologian Education* 15 (Spring, 1979): 113 says that "the persons serving the church as productive ministers who have not been, could not be, or



will not be able to secure a graduate professional theological education need training, credentials, and recognition of their ministry consistent with their service."

But even here we must ask if there is not some type of joint responsibility incumbent upon our theological seminaries and whether that responsibility is denominationally or culturally bound? See William H. Myers, "Towards a Whole Ecclesiology: A Theological/Empirical/Practical Project on Laity Training." Doctor of Ministry Dissertation, Ashland Theological Seminary, 1984 where I have attempted to address this issue and offered a variety of approaches and recommendations as to how this might be accomplished.

Further, I refer all seminaries to the Lilly Project as one superb paradigm in black-white dialogic education. This was a pioneer project under the direction of Professor Gayraud Wilmore of Colgate Rochester. It is documented as "Black Pastors/White Professors: An Experiment in Dialogic Education." *Theological Education* 16, Special Issue 1, Winter 1980.

<sup>22</sup>Harold Hunt, Rational Dialogue: A Challenge to Religious Education." *Religious Education* 76 (May-June, 1981):286 says that antidialogics are the result when one's life experience is rejected.

<sup>23</sup>The interested reader can obtain a more comprehensive literature, resource, paradigm bibliography on either the "black-white experience dichotomy" or the "laity-clergy experience movement" for a nominal fee by contacting Ashland Theological Seminary and referring to my work.

# STEEPLE SITTERS

by Mary Ellen Drushal

When you were a child, did you ever walk across the yard looking through the large lenses of binoculars? I did that once and promptly walked into a tree! Observing scenes through the large lenses sufficiently distorts one's perspective to make things appear a distance away when in reality they are much closer.

The same visual distortion occurs within the church, especially evangelical churches. Constituents within these churches scrutinize Scripture through binoculars and even magnifying glasses to conclude that God's Word is inerrant, infallible and the only sufficient guide and foundation for ministry. God's Word is truth and therefore the only rule for practice. So why does the whole counsel of God go unnoticed? Do evangelical believers become "steeple sitters" and peer at their world through the large end of the binoculars?

In Matthew 22:34-39, a lawyer quizzed Jesus regarding the most significant commandment in the Law. He said there were two: love the Lord your God with your whole being and love your neighbor as yourself. Certainly believing Christians love God and His Word, the historic family album. But loving your neighbor as yourself creates a different dilemma. That implies we must first love ourselves and then translate that love from God to our neighbors through observable and demonstrative acts of love.

Do we love ourselves? Do we adequately love and care for our neighbors? What constitutes a corporate response to these commandments?

## Loving Oneself

We are created in the image of God. In Genesis 1:27 God states: "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." We are His children (John 1:12) created and gifted uniquely to serve Him (I Corinthians 12). Frequently in the church, we are warned that loving oneself immediately connotes the concept of pride and Scripture speaks to this perversion ". . . do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought to think . . ." (Romans 12:3). Loving oneself directly reflects our understanding of the person of God, that He is who He said, and that He can and does do what Scripture records (Ephesians 1:5-7). To not love ourselves amounts to blasphemy!

## Love of Neighbors

You may be saying to yourself, "well, I can understand loving

God and loving myself through His revealed plan for me, but love my neighbor as myself? Who is my neighbor anyway?" Scripture gives a very clear and distinct answer to that question. When Jesus was sending the disciples out as witnesses of the truth they had seen, He instructed them to begin "from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47) or right where they were. In Acts 1:8, the instruction was specific, Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, or right where you are, then to the state, next the country, and finally to the "remotest part of the earth."

While "in Jerusalem" we are responsible to feed the flock, both spiritual and literal food (I Peter 5:1-4). We are commanded to care for and help meet the needs of those believers around us in our congregation. But unfortunately, most "steeple sitters" stop at this point. Brothers and sisters, I fear we are sufficiently busy and content in caring for the needs of our own that we fail to exhibit concern about those who live in the next county or city, let alone the adjacent state or foreign country. If we believe God's Word to be true and without error, then why do we practice such a small portion of it?

Because we have such a high view of Scripture, we often look down our spiritual noses at more liberal interpreters of the Word and at their implementation of what is called "the social Gospel." And yet, many of them may fare better on the day of Judgment because they did what Jesus said, "to feed the hungry, clothe and shelter the homeless, visit the sick and imprisoned" (Matthew 25:34-40).

Loving our neighbors as ourselves requires more than witnessing to them and bringing them, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the fold of the Lord. We must also minister to their needs and sometimes this precedes their coming to Christ! Right now, while you are reading this, take out a sheet of paper and begin to analyze your individual and your church's program of outreach beyond the local congregation. Include on that list organized programs of the church as well as ministries that are carried on by one or two individuals. The proof of what I'm saying lies in the length of that list. How many items are there — two, four, seven, or are there none listed?

Now, let's get specific regarding this personal inventory. When was the last time you or someone you know visited a person in prison? List the most recent person you visited in a nursing home. How often has your family invited a divorcee and children for a meal or an outing? How recently did you take a meal to a family experiencing some difficulty? Throughout the week, does your church have an empty nursery where a day care center could be provided for children of working parents?

By now you likely have one of two responses — either the Holy Spirit has convicted you of your own and/or your church's failings or shortcomings in implementing the loving Gospel of our Lord, or you have become defensive and angry and a heated rebuttal letter is forming in your mind. Often consciences are salved by saying: "I can't minister to someone in prison. It's too dangerous a place;" or "Offer shelter to someone I don't know? Why I could get mugged or killed;" or "Nursing homes are depressing;" or "My church will not provide a day care facility, because we don't want to provide parents with an easy out to foist off their children on the church while they work." Interestingly, the psalmist wrote a beautiful poem in Psalm 91 to ease these expressed anxieties. And God, Himself has promised His presence to those who serve Him (Matthew 28:20). Friends, admit it — we are without excuse before the Lord and our judgment will be quick and sure on that day when we stand before the Almighty God. Will our excuses for not ministering in His name stand up to His scrutiny?

Romans 6:16 states: "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" No equivocation can be gleaned from that statement. Either we serve God or Satan, there is no half and half. How can we love His Word and not obey it? James reminds us to "prove ourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers *who delude themselves*" (James 1:22).

### The Churches Response

By faith, in faith, and through faith, the challenge lies before each reader to do the following:

1. examine your own commitment to Scripture and *all* its teaching;
2. critically analyze your individual and then your church's response to loving neighbors;
3. evaluate the effectiveness of current efforts in meeting the needs of individuals; and then
4. think creatively (that means beyond the traditional expectations) about specific ways you and others in your congregation might carry out our Lord's commands.

Be reminded that we teach little by verbal prattle, but much by what we do and are.

Loving neighbors takes time, energy, commitment, conviction, action, and frequently receives criticism. Jesus was well acquainted with the critics of His day but that didn't deter Him from His task. Jesus ministered to and met the needs of many outside His own covenant family or group. There were no government



programs or subsidies to meet neighbors' needs. In fact, there might not be today if the church had obeyed Jesus' commands! Neighbors reside in every community who will not have their basic survival needs met unless Christian carpenters, lawyers, doctors, educators, plumbers, factory workers, and presidents of corporations, become active in implementing God's Word.

It is time — in fact, past time — for "steeple sitters" to come down from their lofty perch and focus their binoculars using the correct lens on the issue and situations that face neighbors. Love is not a noun, it is a verb. John 14:15, instructs: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Love translates into obedience; obedience into conviction; and conviction into action.

Let us (both individually and corporately) be about the task of loving our neighbors and ministering to them in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!





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# Ashland Theological Journal

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ISSUE

In this 1985 issue, our contributors discuss a variety of issues surrounding the theological dimensions of interpersonal relationships. Dr. JoAnn Ford Watson, Assistant Professor of Historical Theology, uses her theological expertise to articulate a paradigm of Jesus as Friend. In "A Contemporary Model: Jesus as Friend," she defines this paradigm as it is discussed by Jürgen Moltmann and Sallie McFague, explaining its importance for human relationships as well as the vibrant life of the Church. Her discourse is both provocative and timely.

Our second essay, "The Experiential Value of the Critical Incident," describes the positive interface between contemporary psychology and biblical Christianity. Written by co-workers at the Joliet Correctional Center, Dr. Santosh Jain and Rev. Gary Greer, this article details experiences that have led each to develop inner sensitivity toward individual suffering and pain. The lessons learned enable the reader to share the experience of both the psychologist and the counselor that there is "an ember of eternal potentiality that glows in the breast of every member of the human family."

Samuel Hugh Moffett, Professor of Ecumenics at Princeton Theological Seminary, delivered "Theology of Missions" during our Fall Lecture Series in October, 1984. In this third selection, his struggle between a "salvationist" theology of mission versus the more modern "theology of the Kingdom" is instructive and personal. The role of missions and its challenge for the Christian Church's relationships with the non-Christian world is scrutinized, developing theological lessons in obedience. His message has been kept in style and presentation as he delivered it, with minimal editorial changes to capture the spirit of the address.

Our sermonic piece for this issue is by Rev. Virgil Meyer, for many years Director of Religious Affairs at Ashland College and Associate Dean at ATS. That his sermon is entitled "God Is Love" is appropriate, because Rev. Meyer has personified love to thousands of students and parishoners. A former Moderator of the General and District Conference of the Brethren Church, Virgil has pastored in Iowa, Indiana and Ohio. He is known for his deep compassion and concern as well as the giant bear hug he readily gives anyone within reach.

This completes my fifth and final year as editor of the *Ashland Theological Journal*. The task has been rewarding and challenging, and I have many individuals to thank for their help and encouragement. It is with mixed emotions that I pass on the mantle, confident that the next five years will find our journal improved in the process.

— David A. Rausch, **Editor**

# A CONTEMPORARY MODEL: JESUS AS FRIEND

by JoAnn Ford Watson

For Christianity, the discipline of theology seeks to articulate concepts of Jesus Christ which will be understandable to the contemporary church and world. Theology engages various tools which give concrete ways of expressing the being of Christ by bringing to light an aspect of Christ's person which can speak to us today. It is a rediscovery of language and expressions for Christ which can have significant meaning for us today. One such tool is a model or paradigm. A model is an exemplary or figurative way of describing Christ.

This essay will offer a discussion of a contemporary model for Jesus, the model of Jesus as Friend, as it comes to us from the modern theologians, Jürgen Moltmann and Sallie McFague. First, we will define the Model of Jesus as Friend; second, explain this model for human relationships; and third, give an interpretation of this model for the contemporary life of the Church.

## The Model of Jesus as Friend

The model of Jesus as Friend defines Jesus as one who offers affirmation of humanity as he works to bring about relationships which are characterized by mutuality and friendship in divine love and freedom — Jesus as Friend is a parable of God as Friend. Jesus as Friend is One who identifies with humanity in its suffering and joins with humanity in mutual empowering of persons to bring about a better existence.

Jürgen Moltmann discusses this concept of Jesus as Friend. For Moltmann, Jesus illustrated friendship in his life and thus Jesus is a Friend to humanity. Moltmann reinterprets the traditional offices of Christ as prophet, priest and king in terms of Jesus' friendship. As a prophet, Jesus brings the gospel of the Kingdom to the poor and becomes the friend of tax-collectors and sinners. As the high priest, he offers himself "for many" and consummates his love by dying as a friend for a friend. As the exalted Lord, he liberates humanity from its bondage and allows for humanity to be friends for others. As the one who is glorified, he intercedes with the Father for the world. In Jesus' name, friendship with God is possible through prayer.<sup>1</sup>

For Moltmann, the many-faceted work of Christ, which in the doctrine of Christ's three-fold office was presented in terms of sovereignty and function, can be taken to its highest point in his friendship. The joy which Christ communicates and the freedom which he brings as prophet,



priest and king find better expression in the concept of friendship than in the ancient titles. Moltmann states, "For in his divine function as prophet, priest and king, Christ lives and acts as a friend and creates friendship."<sup>2</sup>

In the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as "friend" in two important passages. In Luke 7:34: "The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!'" Jesus accepted public sinners. Jesus' striking friendship with sinners and tax-collectors lies in his joy in God, in the future and in human existence. Jesus becomes the friend of sinners in that he reveals God's friendship to the unlikeable, to those who have been treated badly or alienated from society.

In John 15:13, Jesus declares himself to be the friend of his disciples. When he calls them to himself, he calls them into a new life of friendship: "Greater love has no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." Here, the sacrifice of one's own life for one's friends is the highest form of love. Love manifests itself here as friendship. When he cites friendship as the motive for Jesus' sacrificing his life, John means a love that exists, that is faithful unto death. He means a knowing sacrifice for the sake of friends' lives.<sup>3</sup>

Through Jesus' death, the disciples become friends of Jesus forever. They remain in his friendship, if they follow his commandments and become friends to others. The relationship therefore of men and women to God is no longer simply a dependent, obedient relation of servants to their Master. Nor is it simply the relation of human children to a heavenly Father. For Moltmann, in the fellowship of Jesus, the disciples become friends of God. In the fellowship of Jesus, they no longer experience God only as Lord, nor only as Father; rather they also experience him in his innermost nature as Friend.<sup>4</sup>

Moltmann defines Jesus as Friend who demonstrates God as Friend. Sallie McFague understands God as Friend who illustrates Jesus as Friend. She brings to the fore the model of God as Friend. McFague seeks images of God which speak of the freeing love of God, the new quality of relationship in Jesus which fosters freedom over against structure. McFague states:

The images which tumble from the mouths of those experiencing the liberating love of God are not meant to describe God so much as to suggest the new quality of relationship being offered to them. Hence, religious metaphors and the models that emerge from them are not pictures of God but images of a relationship; as such, they are nonrestrictive and highly particular.<sup>5</sup>

McFague offers the model of God as Friend to express God's unique relationship of freedom with humanity. She refers to the use of the metaphor of friend in the Bible. In terms of the Old Testament, the inclusion of all Israel as the friend of God is seen in Isaiah who states, "But you, Israel my servant, you Jacob whom I have chosen, race of Abraham my friend" (Isaiah 41:18). Friendship with God is also suggested in biblical passages referring to companionship or fellowship with God (Joshua 1:15), partnership with God (Hosea 2:23) and in the New Testament, (I John 1:3, John 17:21, I Cor. 3:9). Like Moltmann, McFague points out Jesus' use of friend in two passages: in Jesus' saying that there is no greater love than laying down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13), and in Jesus' reference to the Son of Man as the friend of tax-collectors (Matt. 11:19, Luke 7:39).<sup>6</sup>

For McFague, the model of God as Friend takes on special significance in terms of Jesus' suffering for humanity. She states that if one of the most meaningful contemporary understandings of the atonement is the suffering of God for and with the pain and oppression of the world, then the model of God as Friend takes on special significance. Jesus in his life and especially at his death is a parable of God's friendship with humanity at its most profound level. McFague states that this is evident in Jesus' parables. In parables such as the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan and the Great Supper, Jesus welcomes outcasts and turns the conventionally righteous away. In Jesus' reading from Isaiah 61:1-2 of the Beatitudes in Luke, he proclaims good news to the poor, release to the captives and liberty for the oppressed. The most dramatic example of Jesus' identification with the sufferings of humanity is seen in Jesus' table-fellowship with sinners and tax-collectors.

McFague discusses the passage in Matt. 11:19 in the same way Moltmann discussed this idea in Luke 7:34: Jesus as a friend of tax-collectors and sinners. McFague makes the observation that Joachim Jeremias, Gunther Bornkamm and Norman Perrin agree that Jesus' practice of eating with the outcasts of his society was both the central feature and the central scandal of his ministry. Jesus' table-fellowship both shocked his enemies and impressed his followers because eating with others was one of the closest forms of intimacy for Jews of that time and conveyed honor to those chosen. One did not eat with the ritually unclean, with Gentiles and with those in despised trades; hence, for Jesus to eat with such peoples, to be called "the friend" of such people was a scandal to most people as well as a form of radical acceptance for his friends at table. The acceptance of the outcasts and the oppressed at table is a concrete enactment of forgiveness of sins. Jesus extends forgiveness and

salvation to the outcasts of society.

I affirm with McFague that Jesus in his friendship with outcasts and sinners is a model of friendship with God. Jesus as parable enacts God's friendship with humanity. The God of Jesus is the One who invites humanity to table to eat together as friends.<sup>7</sup> Jesus is a parable of God as Friend in his befriending of sinners and outcasts.

Furthermore, McFague points out as did Jürgen Moltmann that Jesus as a friend lays down his life for humanity (John 15:12-15). If Jesus is the friend who identifies with the sufferings of the oppressed in his table-fellowship against all expectations and conventions, so also is he the one who in his death lays down his life for his friends. Jesus' way of expressing his love for his friends also ought to be our way of expressing gratitude for such love — we too must lay down our lives by the example of Jesus. Thus, we are no longer called "servants" but "friends," doing for others what our friend did for us. Jesus is a Friend of humanity even unto death.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Model of Friend for the Ethic of Friendship**

This model of Jesus as Friend understands Jesus as one who suffers with humanity yet one who seeks to work within creation for a new humanity; that is, to foster new relationships beyond the sufferings of humanity which then opens a new creation of wholeness, equality and mutuality. The model of Jesus as Friend affects new relationships between humanity. The model of Friend offers an ethic of friendship. Friendship in human relationships in terms of freedom and mutuality is indigeneous to the model of Jesus as Friend.

Let us draw now upon Jürgen Moltmann's expression of this idea of friendship in freedom. For Moltmann, friendship is a deep human relation that arises out of freedom, consists in mutual freedom and preserves this freedom. Moltmann contends that we are not by nature free, but become so only when someone likes us. Friendship combines respect with affection. One does not have to submit to a friend. One neither looks up to nor down at a friend. One can look a friend in the face. In friendship one experiences oneself, just as one is readily accepted and respected in one's own freedom. Moltmann states, "When one person likes another, then the one respects the other in his or her individuality, and delights in his or her singularities as well."<sup>9</sup>

Friendship exists without compulsion or constraint. It is freedom to help, to suffer with, to confide in and to share joy with a friend. Freedom in friendship overcomes existing social structures and enables humanity to be whole persons in the relationship of friendship. Moltmann declares that between friends there rules no prejudice that

defines one and no ideal image after which one must strive. A friend is the new person; the true person, the free person. Friendship is open respect and affection for each person as a whole human being.<sup>10</sup>

In Jesus Christ as the Friend, friendship is not a closed circle among peers. In Jesus' incarnation, in the cross and in his friendship with sinners and tax-collectors, there is an inclusivity of humanity as friends of Jesus. Moltmann contends that because of Christ, Christian friendship cannot be lived within a closed circle of the faithful but must be open in public affection and respect for others. Jesus' friendship for his disciples, for sinners and tax-collectors is not a private secluded friendship but within the circle of Jesus, there is an openness, inclusivity of Jesus toward all humanity. It is open friendship<sup>11</sup>

Jesus as Friend fosters an understanding of mutual friendship for humanity that is characterized by affirmation of the whole personhood of the individual in love. Jesus demonstrates this love in friendship in light of his messianic mission as the Christ. Jesus as the Christ, as the Friend of all humanity, inaugurates new life that is characterized by love. This love is exemplified by Jesus for his friends, especially Mary, Martha and Lazarus (Luke 10:38ff, John 11, 12).

The story of Lazarus in John 11:3-44 illustrates Jesus' love for his friend, Lazarus, as well as for Mary and Martha. The Greek for love in the phrase in John 11:5 ("Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus") is **agapan**. It is Jesus' infinite divine love for humanity, male and female. It is illustrated here when Jesus demonstrates divine love for his friends (male and female). In 11:3, 11, 36, the Greek for love is **philein**; 11:3: "Lord, he whom you love is ill," and 11:36: "See how he loved him," and 11:11: "Our friend (**philos**) Lazarus has fallen asleep." The Greek verb for love, **phileo**, signifies Jesus' love or affection accorded to his friends, especially Lazarus. It is love in friendship. Raymond Brown states that **philein** and **philos** are used in 11:3, 11, 36 with the same significance as **agapan** in 11:5.<sup>12</sup>

I concur with Brown that these two verbs are used equally to express Jesus' divine love in friendship. The verbs, **philein** and **agapan**, illustrate Jesus' great infinite love for his friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Jesus' friendship with humanity is of an infinite divine quality of love. Friendship for Jesus is characterized by divine love, **agapan**. Jesus demonstrates this in his life of ministry, death and resurrection. He calls it into being among humanity, among men and women. Friendship is not only affection but it must embody the divine love Jesus demonstrated with his friends. In Jesus, divine love is exemplified in friendship.

I am discussing love, **agapan**, as it is primarily understood in the



Johannine literature because here Jesus' divine love is expressed most concretely in terms of friendship. John exemplifies the divine love of Jesus as Friend. It is love which is the character of friendship. John emphasizes the love of Christ for those whom God has given him, for his friends. Through the Son, the love of God reaches the world and humanity. This love is divine; it reaches the world through Christ (John 17:23ff, 14:21ff). Jesus exemplifies this divine love in his circle of friends, for his disciples and for humanity (John 16:27b, 21:15-17). In John 13:23 and 15:13-16 **agapan** is used for love which indicates that Jesus calls his disciples, friends, in divine love.<sup>13</sup> Jesus portrays the divine love of God and calls humanity to exemplify his love. Humanity, male and female, will show themselves to have the same friendship Jesus exemplified for his friends, if humanity loves as Jesus did.

In the Johannine letters, the divine love of Jesus is put forth as a reality for the life of fellowship with one another in Christ. I John states, "We love because he first loved us," (I John 4:19, **agapan**). In exemplifying this divine love with one another, humanity reflects this divine love in relationships, they exemplify the relationship that Jesus established with humanity in giving God's divine love: they become friends of God, and friends with one another (**philoï**)<sup>14</sup> John III states, "Peace be to you. The friends (**philoï**) greet you. Greet the friends every one of them" (III John 15). In this mutual salutation, believers are friends of God and friends with one another in divine love which characterizes friendship. From the model of Jesus as Friend, there emerges a new ethic for human relationships: Friendship in freedom and mutuality through Jesus' divine love that can affirm whole personhood within the mutual sharing of God's divine love one to the other.

### The Model of Friend for Church

The Church is the Community of Jesus Christ as Friend which can be the context for the ethic of friendship to be actualized (as in John). The Spirit of Jesus Christ as Friend penetrates the community of Christ to bring about a freedom and love which fosters affirmation and wholeness of personhood in friendship. In Christ, humanity is a new creation. E.S. Gerstenberger and W. Schrage declare that the Pauline letters give testimony to the fact that women and men are equally "new creations in Christ" (II Cor. 5:17). This comprehensive renewal implies equal worth of male and female in Christ. Therefore, Gerstenberger and Schrage contend that in the early period of the Church, men and women were called to service as "fellow workers of God" (I Cor. 3:9). During and after Easter, there are both men and women active in the Spirit of Christ in the Christian community. The Christian community

is characterized by mutuality and partnership, friendship. Gerstenberger and Schrage state, "There is rather a community of sisters and brothers based on free co-operation among members with organizational forms of partnership."<sup>15</sup>

There is openness and co-operation between men and women in the Church. Paul states, "my fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 16:3) or "these women . . . have labored side by side with me in the gospel" (Phil. 4:3). Therefore, men and women freely participate in the activity of the Christian community in the Spirit of Christ (I Cor. 12:4ff). Freedom in Christ is actualized in the early Christian community for all humanity. There is here a mutuality and co-operation with one another in the freedom and spirit of Christ. Jesus Christ as Friend bestows upon the Christian community his divine love which fosters friendship and mutuality among humanity in his name by the power of his Spirit. Through the power of Jesus Christ as Friend, there is in the Christian community, an affirmation of the wholeness of personhood. Jesus Christ as Friend bestows upon the Christian community a freeing love which fosters friendship and mutuality for humanity.

Therefore, I believe that the Church today can reflect that same freeing love of Jesus Christ for humanity. The Church today can help to foster friendship with humanity in the Spirit of Christ by exemplifying his divine love one to another in freedom and friendship. The Galatians 3:28 passage reflects the intent for freedom and wholeness of humanity in the divine love of Jesus as Friend of humanity for the Church and for the world. Patricia Remy states that the "real locus classicus for man and woman and indeed all humanity now redeemed in neighborly love for one another whether Jew or Greek, free or slave, male or female is Gal. 3:28."<sup>16</sup>

Moltmann's understanding of the Church emphasizes this point. He understands the Church as a fellowship of friends **Communio sanctorum** or **Congregatio sanctorum**. It is the commandment in which the Spirit of Christ can be actualized for the wholeness and freedom of all humanity in friendship. The Church as the fellowship of friends illustrates that the power of Christ goes beyond the boundaries of race, sex and class. Friendship in the fellowship of the Church is a new relationship which goes beyond the societal roles of those involved. Friendship is an open relationship which spreads love because it combines affection with respect for all persons. The freedom which springs out of friendship is freeing for new life itself. It is the affirmation of humanity in Jesus. Jesus is Friend to humanity, and humanity can be friends to one another in loving friendship in the community of friends, the Church. Moltmann states:

The **Congregatio sanctorum**, [the Church] the community of brethren is really the fellowship of friends who live in the friendship of Jesus and spread friendliness in the fellowship by meeting the forsaken with affection and the despised with respect.<sup>17</sup>

The Church represents the Spirit of freedom and friendship in love which Jesus as Friend inaugurates. Love and wholeness is grounded in the love of Jesus; it is given for humanity to share in a community in friendship. Jesus as Friend fosters love for humanity and for the Church in a Spirit of freedom and friendship.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Jürgen Moltman, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, translated by Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 118-19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>Jürgen Moltmann, *The Passion For Life* adapted translation by M. Douglas Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. 56-57.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>5</sup>Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology, Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. 166.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 180-81.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 180-81.

<sup>9</sup>Moltmann, *The Passion For Life*, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-53.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-63.

<sup>12</sup>Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 191.

<sup>13</sup>Ethelbert Stauffer, "Agapao" in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 52-53.

<sup>14</sup>Gustav Stahlin, "Phileo" in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel, Vol. IX. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 165-66.

<sup>15</sup>E.S. Gerstenberger and W. Schrage, *Women and Man*, translation Douglas Scott (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1981), pp. 149, 157.

<sup>16</sup>Patricia Remy, "Karl Barth's Theology on Man and Woman," Incomplete Dissertation for the University of Basel, Switzerland, June 18, 1978, Section 3, p. 49.

<sup>17</sup>Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, pp. 316-317.

# THE EXPERIENTIAL VALUE OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT

by Santosh Jain and Gary Greer

Many seminaries across the country require their Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry students to pursue, in addition to their regular theological course work, participation in Clinical Pastoral Education programs. Students participating in these programs receive supervision from an accredited supervisor and function as pastoral interns in various medical hospitals, correctional institutions and mental health facilities. Along with their pastoral functioning, the C.P.E. student participates in individual counseling encounters with his supervisor as well as group dynamic processes with other students.

Much has been said on the grassroots level of the C.P.E. programs about the learning process, a process called learning through the clinical method. Simply stated it is a method of learning whereby the student starts with and examines his prejudices, fears, attitudes, interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics and faith system in the light of knowledge he receives in ministry, through group interaction and individual supervision.

This clinical method of learning is quite different from the more traditional educational mode wherein the student is given neat little packages full of helpful facts and information into which the student must plug his experience, often without the benefit of much personal insight. The struggle to integrate theory with experience is often a painful and arduous one. An integral part of that clinical learning method is for the student to experience, document and analyze those incidents that arouse some significant issue in him. In the C.P.E. vernacular these events of awareness are written in a form called Critical Incident Reports. Obviously, each student's critical incidents are unique to him as he gains valuable personal insight through this living laboratory method.

In the pages that follow, we would like to share a couple of such critical incidents that have become part of our experience as well as vehicles through which we have received invaluable spiritual insight and professional growth. We will begin with a narrative about Sarah which illustrates quite vividly some of the very same issues that seminarians, lay persons and clergymen might struggle with in the course of their seminary or pastoral experience.

## The Experience of Santosh Jain

I had the privilege of seeing the patients and staff at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, which is associated with Northwestern University



Medical School, as a Staff Psychologist for about five years. Patients, who were physically and neurologically disabled, were provided with much needed psychological services at the Institute. My primary responsibilities included rendering psychodiagnostic and psychotherapeutic services to patients and their families, providing consultation for treatment teams regarding therapeutic management, developing and coordinating behavioral treatment programs, acting as liason with community organizations and providing follow-up services for discharged patients.

In retrospect, I am aware of the fact that along with the altruistic goals of providing desperately needed psychological services at the Institute, there were agenda items of my own. I strove for financial security, good evaluations and recognition from my colleagues. Obviously these all were common and legitimate goals when kept in proper perspective with larger issues. I justified my strivings by telling myself that all of us need the respect of our colleagues, and that I deserved to be secure after years of study. I took pride in being able to make accurate and comprehensive diagnostic assessments on which effective treatment plans were based, but I sometimes lost sight of precisely how profoundly the disabilities of my patients affected them emotionally and would change their lives, and of how my professional persona insulated me from their pain and protected me from gaining insight into my own.

About a year ago an incident occurred and caused me to reprioritize some of my well established notions about the infallibility of my profession's diagnostic procedures. I also caught a glimpse of the power of the human spirit and the identity of my professional persona. A patient, whom I'll call Sarah, was diagnosed by neuropsychodiagnostic testing and found to be aphasic, intellectually deficient and unable to speak. One day Sarah was sitting near another less neurologically damaged patient who was gradually falling out of her chair. Sarah, the supposedly non-communicative patient, began calling out and frantically moving her arms as she pointed to her fellow patient who was about to fall. According to neuropsychodiagnostic evaluation and therapeutic labels, Sarah should not have been able to generate verbal or symbolic communications. Sarah's behavior forced me to reevaluate the validity of neuropsychological tests and the potentialities of the non-communicative patient. Sarah was more aware than I of the important event going on in her world, and she solved the problem (a problem I thought to be too difficult or even impossible in the light of her limitations). Exactly whose awareness was limited? Certainly not hers!

Why had she not communicated before? Had it been that our diagnostic test battery failed to provide sufficient motivation to stimulate this patient to a level of exertion? Here was a woman who could neither

feed herself nor speak, but did care enough about her fellow patient that she struggled to generate the sound and gestures necessary to gain assistance for her friend. Perhaps our tests were not designed well enough to fully ascertain the limitations of her abilities. Maybe she did not bother to make sure the psychologist received valid answers on his tests. Possibly she was able to help her friend because she was operating on a different level of consciousness that our tests could not measure. Perhaps we failed to consider the power of the human spirit. I learned from Sarah that because of, and often in spite of our own fragility, we psychologists have the capacity to care for others in the midst of their fragility.

What has just been said thus far has not been said to discredit the results of our neuropsychological evaluations. Rather, it has been said to emphasize the fact that those results are therapeutic aids for treating the neurologically impaired, not boards and nails with which to build barriers for them. We must not allow our evaluations and labels to impede our inner sensitivity and insulate us from their pains. Sarah and patients like her have helped me heighten my level of awareness of my own patience, anger, fears, failures and transience. I am becoming aware of how these issues cause me to function.

I left the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and assumed the Directorship of Psychiatric and Psychological services at the Joliet Correctional Center in Joliet, Illinois in the Spring of 1984. I am often astounded at the terrific pace with which new critical incidents come in this maximum security prison setting. While at the Institute, I was convinced that those who had lost the full use of their minds and limbs suffered most profoundly. However, since leaving the Institute and coming to the prison setting, I have had to rethink my position. I have grown to realize that able-bodied, young men are also suffering tremendously, but in a different dimension. There is a deeper pain felt by the inmate. His suffering is to the point where he feels acute despair, hopelessness and may feel suicide is his only relief. Our free society continues to offer those with legitimate physical disabilities its love and empathetic concern. Those individuals in the free society still receive the benefits and support offered by their community; prisoners sense this and have great difficulty in accepting the realization that a six-by-eight foot cell is their home, and thirty-five foot stone walls are the perimeters of their world.

I am grateful to my patients at the Institute for their work on me as we journeyed along the same pathway. It is the lessons I learned there that are lighting my journey at the Joliet Correctional Center.

## The Experience of Gary Greer

I began my journey as a Prison Chaplain shortly after graduation from Ashland Theological Seminary in the Spring of 1980. Seminary had been a time of spiritual and intellectual challenge. It was now time to put feet to the theological precepts and principles of counseling I received at ATS and Emerge Counseling Center. My journey has taken me behind the stone walls and iron gates of two different maximum security prisons. I have had many new experiences and several critical incidents that have provided me with the opportunities to confront myself, change and grow.

One such incident occurred the first year of my chaplaincy service. An inmate, whom I'll call George, had been brought to the prison's emergency room unconscious with severe trauma to his head and face. The doctors and nurses were able to stabilize the inmate's condition and he was transferred by ambulance to a community hospital trauma center. Later that same evening I drove to the hospital and made my way to George's bedside in the intensive care unit. He lay unconscious in the bed and the monitor screen indicated he had no brain activity whatsoever. As I stood quietly, the officer who was guarding the inmate looked up from his magazine and said, "What's the matter Rev? He's only a convict. It's better him than one of us." The callousness of the officer's remark had a tremendous impact on me. I can remember the helplessness I felt as I stood there and contemplated the fragility of the ember of life. It was during those few moments that I became aware of my own vulnerability, transience and loneliness.

An inmate's death, the death of a parishoner, or loved one, represents to all of humankind a note of finality. Even Christ wept at the tomb of Lazarus in spite of the fact that he knew he would raise Lazarus. It is often as we catch a glimpse of our own fragility that we receive inspiration to question the purposes and goals of our own lives. We can often use the awareness of our transience to motivate us to a new level of urgency concerning the execution of our task regardless of our station in life. All of us, especially professionals, must reprioritize the order of things, activities and dreams in our lives from time to time. It is ironic how unimportant some things become when they are reevaluated in the light of the eternal.

Another important lesson I learned through this critical incident is that ministry must be translated from the philosophical, academic and theological, into concrete, practical, flesh and blood issues of real life. It is not enough to have memorized creeds, Greek vocabulary and psychological theory. The real task is to touch people, whether they are inmates, patients or parishoners, where they hurt. All people helpers, whether clergyman, physician or psychologist, have been called to flesh

out the words of Isaiah when he wrote, "It is our task to bring the good news to the poor; to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set a liberty to those that are bruised."

Since we are all fragile, we can allow ourselves the luxury of being aware that we share the joys, hopes, sorrows and failures of life with our fellow men. It is only when barriers and defenses fade, when divisions and differences disappear, that we can communicate freely. We discovered that there are few significant differences between a psychologist and an aphasic or the chaplain and an inmate. We are all vulnerable. We are all transitory. The powerful human spirit is resident in all of us. It is a beautiful lesson to learn that there is little in life that is static. We are all pilgrims in progress. Time changes people. Circumstances change and events occur in our lives or the lives of those we love and are concerned about that profoundly affect us. Catastrophic accidents, financial reverses and serious illnesses all put us in touch with our own transience. The awareness of our own transience is a powerful tool for the student, minister and psychologist to relate to clients, who are struggling with their own morality, disability or perceived personal imperfections. It is only as we lay hold of our own transience that we can empathize and help the struggling client and challenge him to grow. It is the vulnerable self in all of us that must learn to become more comfortable with the fact we do not have all the answers to the bigger questions of life and death and faith.

### The Critical Incident and Ministry

Dr. Jain's journey as a psychologist and mine as a chaplain has brought us to the place where we must touch the root of the inmate's suffering. Our challenge is to have unconditional positive regard for the prisoners despite their criminal histories. We have both felt and seen the divine potential in each of these men in spite of the fact that many of them have been convicted of heinous crimes against their fellow human beings.

Our interactions with people like Sarah and George have caused us to examine other significant issues as well. We often come face to face with someone we do not always recognize at first. That someone is our professional personas. The Psychiatric Dictionary gives the following Jungian definition of the persona:

**Persona** (per-so'-na) With this term Jung denotes the disguised or masked attitude assumed by a person, in contrast to the more deeply rooted personality components. "Through his more or less-complete identification with the attitude of the moment he at least deceives others, and also often himself,



as to his real character. He puts on a mask, which he knows corresponds with his conscious intentions, while it also meets with the requirements and opinions of his environment, so that first one motive then the other is in the ascendant. This mask, viz. the ad hoc adopted attitude, I have called the persona, which was the designation given to the mask work by actors of antiquity. A man who is identified with this mask I would call "personal" (as opposed to "individual").<sup>1</sup>

A most helpful benefit of the critical incident for the student minister, or layman, is to present him with the opportunity to meet his own persona. For some students it is the first time they might have been aware they were even wearing a mask. For others it may be the rare opportunity for them to take their mask off, if only for a moment, and gain perhaps the painful awareness of what it is like to not have it to hide behind.

Another benefit is for the student to realize as he counsels, ministers or preaches that he must encounter not only the persona of others, but the vulnerable selves of others which lie beneath their masks. It is here to the vulnerable real self that the Holy Spirit will make His impact, often using us through clinically proficient ministry. Often critical incidents expose our own quest for material security and pseudo-security of the praise from our colleagues. I believe no one summarized more effectively the futility of collecting things that we think will make us more secure than the scriptures that tell us not to store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal (Matthew 6:19). The scriptures also speak quite succinctly about our overestimating the value of our own intellectual pursuits and struggling to be secure. The scripture again tells us, we are all like the grass of the field. Today we sprout, grow tall and flourish. As the noon day sun rises, we become dried and parched. Tomorrow we shall be gathered together in bundles and used for fuel in the oven (Luke 12:28). Our individual lives are temporary in the scheme of the universe. We are transient. The security of wealth, health, recognition, even life itself is so fragile and almost vaporous. We are all more vulnerable than we want to admit.

### **The Potential**

There is an ember of eternal potentiality that glows in the breast of every member of the human family. Those of us who interact with others in an effort to effect change or growth in them, must realize that we are accompanying our fellow humans on their journey through life. We must constantly be mindful as we encounter others that we are touching much

more than mere organisms. Wayne Oates addressed the issue by saying, "Even though we are strangers and pilgrims in an idolatrous world, we are members of the commonwealth of those who care. Out of this caring relationship comes a feeling of ability and a feeling of single-hearted devotion, valuing ourselves as we are valued by God and those to whom we are profoundly related."<sup>2</sup>

The clergyman and psychologist will only become comfortable with his or her own humanness when they can see and touch that same humanness in others. Christ himself is able to touch the humanness in us because the humanness of the incarnate Christ struggled with the rigors of life and death. The purpose of the Kenosis was to robe God with flesh so that He could be understood by men as well as provide grace for them. He still choses to reveal His love to mankind through the Christ in us. Christ laughed with the merry and wept with the crushed. We should do no less.

There are few significant differences between any of us. We are all transitory. The ember of eternal potential is in each of us. The work of grace is equally necessary for us all. The infinite strives to be the friend to each of us.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>C.G. Jung. "Psychological Types." *The Psychiatric Dictionary* (New York: Harcourt, 1923).

<sup>2</sup>Wayne Oates, *The Psychology of Religion* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1973).

# THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS

By Samuel Hugh Moffett

There was a time when nobody had to give lectures about the theology of the world Christian mission. A Christian did not feel the need to re-examine the theological foundation of world outreach for Jesus Christ. They did not need to ask why they had missionaries. They did not even ask very often what missionaries had to do — were supposed to do. It was axiomatic; it was simple; it was dangerous; and above all, it was overwhelmingly urgent. It was as simple as the command of Jesus Christ, and as urgent as life and death for millions upon millions who are dying without Christ. Every second saw more souls slipping into a Christless eternity. No one had ever given them a chance. No one had ever told them that they could live forever — in Christ. And faced with a challenge as simple as that, the Christian church exploded into what has been called the “modern missionary movement.” It could be almost described as a race against time and against the devil for the greatest of all prizes, the eternal salvation of the human soul. That’s the classic, perhaps the most familiar, theology of missions. It’s a salvationist theology.

Now if you are expecting me to ridicule that challenge, you are going to be disappointed, because it has never seemed ridiculous to me. In fact, it was basically that challenge that turned me into a missionary. I wanted to be a professor of classical Greek; and my father had often told me that if you could be anything except a missionary or a minister, be it. It’s not that he did not want me to be a missionary. I knew that. He did not want me to be a missionary for the wrong reason, that is, just because he was a missionary. My mother was a classicist, and so I majored in classical Greek. I wanted to be a professor of that fine subject.

And then the chairman of the board of Princeton Theological Seminary (in the 1940s) stood up in chapel one day. His name was Robert E. Speer. And he gave one illustration that I could not get out of my mind. He took off his wristwatch and he held it up, and he told those seminary students, including me, “Your watch could tick for nine and one-half years without numbering the lost souls in China alone.” Nine and a half years! A tick for each soul. Somehow I could not get that out of my mind, and I became a missionary to China.

I’m not going to ridicule that challenge — it still means the basic mission of the church to me. But you know as well as I that there came a day of the shaking of the foundation. The old urgencies were denied, or at least ignored. No one seemed sure of anything eternal anymore. So in a great deal of the world’s missionary thinking, the challenge

changed. The Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1928 put it this way: "Our fathers were impressed with horror that men should die without Christ. We are equally impressed with horror that they should live without Christ."

I think most of those who accepted that statement were not considering it a denial of the old urgencies, but some of them were. And at least, it was a change of emphasis. My father was a delegate to that conference, and I can remember him coming back shaking his head. He was not quite sure about theological underpinnings. He had been at Edinburgh in 1910, and he came away from that exhilarated. Jerusalem left him a little shaken.

It was, I suppose, a strategic withdrawal to what was considered firmer ground. You may be able to deny — at least you can not prove to an unbeliever — that millions are dying into eternity without Christ. But, no one can deny that millions upon millions are living in misery and in filth and in hunger. No one can deny that. No one has ever given them a chance. No one has ever helped them to the life abundant that Jesus came to give. This was a challenge to a future not in the unknown beyond or outside of history. It was a challenge to a hopeful future in history. A future without hunger, and without hate; without sickness and without tears; where all men are brothers and all women sisters; and the nations shall study war no more, and justice shall roll down as the river and roll into the sea.

So the church went forth to build the kingdom. That is the second, the more modern, theology of missions — the theology of the Kingdom. In its most popular form, in Latin America, it has emerged with some changes as a theology of liberation — liberation from all the injustices of life in this world.

Now, I am not going to ridicule that view either. It has never seemed ridiculous to me to feed the hungry, and to heal the sick, and to work for peace and against injustice and oppression. But, again, you know as well as I that the paralysis of doubt has struck again. The foundation shook; the roof fell in; the revolutions did not accomplish all they were supposed to accomplish. Human promises are not even as safe as God's promises to unbelievers. The unbelievers are beginning not to believe in their own revolutions (in addition to beginning to have their doubts about God). And this has happened within what too many had believed was the Kingdom — Christendom, the West. Here is the Kingdom of God. We build it here; we spread it around the world. And we have lost that kind of confidence, thank heaven. The Kingdom refused to stay built, and the builders of the Kingdom began to lose hope.

You see, the problem of our time in a theology of missions is that



neither pattern seems to be able to win a complete consensus within the church. We tend to move either in one direction or the other with our theology of missions. The savers of souls; the builders of the Kingdom. Now theologically, I think we have to begin by admitting that we do not save souls. The salvationist theology does not rest upon our efforts — it rests primarily and fundamentally in the grace of God. But, so also with the building of the Kingdom. No matter how well-intentioned your motives are, as you vote for one man or the other for president, neither one of them is going to build the Kingdom. You will have to take a lesser choice, and you will have to get back to theology, not political science. In fact, today, it is the older theology of mission that is picking up strength again — the classical theology of salvation — rather than the newer “kingdom” theology of mainline churches like mine (if you have to separate them).

It is the salvation theology that for the last twenty years has been the basic driving power behind contemporary world mission outreach. Contrary to popular church opinion, the number of overseas missionaries sent from North America across the world is not declining. It continues to leap upward. In five years, from 1975 to 1979, overseas missionary personnel from North America, calculated on a year of service per person basis, so that you could include both short termers and career missionaries, shot up from about 35,000 to 53,000 in just five years, an increase of almost 50 percent. That means that the North American missionary force is actually growing year after year at an average rate three times that of the United States’ population. That is the good news.

The bad news comes from my side of the American church scene — the mainline denominational side. The bad news is that none of this dramatic explosion in contemporary North American missions can be credited to the mainline churches as denominations (the larger ones). The increase is mainly outside the so-called religious establishment. David Stowe who was with me in China, a Congregationalist, a United Church of Christ executive of the United Church’s Board for World Missions, and very much mainline, reported just three years ago three things: First, the traditional missionary sending system is stronger than ever. Second, the foreign missionary force in North America is at an all-time high. Third, the center of gravity of Protestant missionary sending is shifting constantly away from the ecumenical agencies toward conservative and fundamentalist ones. That is David Stowe’s report.

And when I look at the stunning percentages of decline in overseas career missionaries in the major denominations, I have to report figures like this: Episcopal Church — 79 percent decline between 1972 and 1979. 79 percent decline in seven years! My own church, U.P.C., at that time

it was U.P.C.S.A., United Presbyterian Church, 72 percent decline. United Church of Christ — 66 percent. Methodist — 46 percent. By contrast, here are some statistics from churches outside the National Council: Southern Baptist, plus 88 percent. Assemblies of God, plus 49 percent.

Well, actually in basic theological motivation and purpose, there may not be much difference between the savers of souls and the builders of the Kingdom. It is their theological substructures that seem to be so different. Basically both are operating on the principle of love. I will give credit to those who differ from me — their intentions are good. One is a concentration on love for individuals and concern for each human being's eternal welfare; the other is more generalized — love for all humanity, a concern for its present well-being. But, if you will forgive me, I am beginning to question how far one should go in making "love" the theological motive of the Christian Mission.

I know that sounds heretical, but was "love" the motive of the original mission of the church of Jesus Christ? On both sides, I think, of this missiological divide between the so-called liberals and the so-called conservatives, there has arisen a questioning about the absolute foundation. A search for a deeper, theological base for mission, a mission based not on love for individuals, not on our love of the church, not even on our love for all humanity in this disordered world, but a mission based squarely on God's love, not ours. Some have called this a new missionary theology. They have given it the name "missio dei" theology, the theology of the mission of God — the trinitarian God.

Unfortunately, it is hard to pin it down. It has produced so many contradictory interpretations that "missio dei" is virtually useless as a defining term. To some it means that mission is God-at-work-in-the-world-independent-of-the-church as in the other world religions. God at work in Hinduism; God at work in Buddhism; God at work in Islam. "Missio dei". Now that was not the idea of the one who coined that term, but it is partly true. The Christian need never be afraid or surprised to find the true, the good and the beautiful in other religions.

My father was a strict, old-school Presbyterian, very orthodox. He had a small statue of Buddha in his study. I often wondered how a man as orthodox as my father could carry around a heathen god. And he used it in an object lesson to Korean Christians — pastors who would come in and be equally shocked. And father would say, "Well it is beautiful, though, isn't it? And you really should be proud of everything in your own wonderful, national culture if you can remember that this is not a god. And if you do not give the impression that you are worshipping this as a god. If you can accept it as a beautiful piece of art, you do not need to be afraid of it. Remember the weaker brother. Sometimes people

misunderstand. Make very clear that they do, that this is not Jesus Christ, and Buddha is not the savior." But there is beauty; there is goodness; sometimes there is even truth in the other higher religions. Don't be afraid of that. Sometimes you can use it as a bridge if you are careful.

But any form of "missio dei" theology which bypasses the incarnate Son, the Savior Jesus Christ for other names, however good, however true, however beautiful they may be, runs the frightful risk of demonizing what is good and true and beautiful, which was, of course, the original sin. Remember, the demonization of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is still good and evil, but it can be demonized.

George Vicedom has a book simply called *Missia: The Mission of God (Missio Dei)*. He was the first to popularize the term, and he recognized this danger. He warned that we cannot minimize the power of evil even in the higher religions — power which can turn everything base into light and pervert everything good. That is why he writes, "Jesus understood the Lordship of God and the purpose of his sending to be this: that the works of the devil must be destroyed. And the prince of this world must be judged." "To this," said George Vicedom, "we must cling even at the risk of being fundamentalistic."

And he was no fundamentalist. His own interpretation of "missio dei" theology, which was the interpretation endorsed at a very important missionary consultation in 1952, is not a multi-religious mission. It was rather God's mission through Jesus Christ and the church. It appreciates truth wherever truth is found, but its mission centers in the truth as revealed in the One who said, "I am the Truth." Put very simply, this would say that the Christians' world mission is to break through any barrier that separates any part of the world from Jesus Christ and to tell the good news about Him to anyone who will listen in any possible way that they can understand. Any possible way they can understand! It is Christ-centered, but it begins with the love of God the Father, not your love for the perishing heathen.

Of course, love is fundamental. It was love that started the mission. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It began with love. But that was the love of God the Father, and the missionary was God the Son. What is the missionary's motive? Can we find one in the Son? I am treading on dangerous theological ground when I begin separating the persons of the Trinity, but do it as an exercise, not as final truth.

I am not prepared to deny that it was love that brought Christ into the world on his mission of reconciliation. However, it may be worth noting that the Bible does not say so. It is full of His love for the world, His compassion that knows no bounds. But where are we told that He came

to the world because He loved it? Insofar as the Bible does distinguish between the Son and the Father in reference to mission, it tells us, it seems to me, that the Father founds the mission because He loves; the Son goes on the mission because He is sent. There is a difference. The motive of the Son, the missionary, is obedience. Look at the glimpse that Paul gives us into the mind of Christ before His mission. Philippians. The lesson is not love. The lesson is humility and obedience, even unto the death at the cross. He loves the world, of course, but He goes because He is sent. He loves the whole world, but He goes to the Jews because He is sent. That is the only explanation He gives of the apparent narrowness of His mission. "I'm not sent, but to the lost sheep in Israel." He loves the world enough to die for it, but He goes to the cross because He is sent. ("Not my will, but Thine be done.") It seems to me that the compelling, insistent motive of mission — a going mission — is obedience. God is love, but it was Christ's obedience that forged and focused and incarnated that love into a mission.

Now, is not the lesson pretty much the same when we turn to the apostles, the first missionaries of the church. Was it love for a despised and rejected race that sent Philip to the Ethiopian? Not according to the record. "The angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip, 'Arise and go.'" And he obeyed and he went. Was it love that sent Peter to the proud and the unclean? To Gentiles like us? Not according to the record. "The Spirit said unto him, 'Arise and go'" and he went. Was it a passion for millions of lost Gentile souls, dying without hope, that first made Paul a missionary. Separate me Barnabas and Paul, says the Spirit, and obedience sent him almost reluctantly from his beloved Jews to the Gentiles. "The Lord commanded me saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles."

In the strange new world of the Bible, apostles and missionaries are made not just by looking at the world with compassion and love, but by listening to God in obedience. Now, do not misunderstand me. If you obey without love, you are not much of a Christian missionary. The missionary goes in love, but goes because he or she obeys. And here is where we begin to ask how do we know clearly enough to obey so simply?

Well, the first theological lesson in obedience is to make very sure that you are obeying God and not man. That you can say, "the Lord is sending me, the Spirit has spoken to me." And that is not a lesson I can teach you from theology. That is a lesson you will have to learn in your own deepening Christian experience. And that is the only basis you will have for mission as a missionary of God in Christ. We are simply not sent into the world to save souls — the Spirit saves souls. We are simply



not sent into the world to revolutionize society — the Kingdom of God comes not by men, but by the return of Jesus Christ.

There is one problem that you will have. How is it that when you go, people will not see you as obeying God or even responding in love? Most people will see you (if you respond to this call in obedience and in love) with skepticism, with antagonism. You will go out in obedience, you will go out to proclaim your love, and people will not necessarily believe you or follow you. Why should they? I am wondering if there is not another final lesson in obedience that we particularly here in the West must learn. I heard a young pastor years ago speak of the story of doubting Thomas. Why did the disciple insist on seeing the print of the nails? Why did he thrust his hand into the wound in the side? It was more than simply to identify the risen Lord, the pastor suggested. He said Thomas wanted to be sure that the Lord who was asking him to follow was indeed the same Lord who had suffered for him. Only then did he follow. And perhaps our trouble is that most of the world no longer identifies us with the cross of Jesus Christ. To most of the world, the symbol of the Western missionary — face this! — is not even the savior of souls or builder of the Kingdom. It is unjust, but to most of the world, the symbol of the Christian missionary is a soft, white, rich American. And why should the people follow that?

Do not misunderstand me. We are not asked to suffer. It is our Lord's suffering that we exemplify. But how can we ask the world to follow us to Jesus Christ until we are ready ourselves to follow Him? And He still says, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." And what have I really denied myself to be a missionary? I have had my problems. My father had more than I. But what real cross do I bear? It is an amazing war of theological assurance that the missionary engages in. We have confidence; we believe. But that rings true only in the obedience that we show the world to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is the mission of God; obedience to God; the following of Jesus Christ; and the listening and the empowering — our listening and His empowering — the Holy Spirit, that is ultimately the foundation of any missionary theology.

# GOD IS LOVE

by Virgil Meyer

Scripture: I John 4:7-21

Text: "*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*" (I John 4:8)

In his letter, John points out many truths to the Christians to whom he is writing. We have found that he has taught them many things about God. That God is Light, He is Spirit, He is eternal, He is Father. But perhaps the most clear picture he gives of God is that God is Love. Keep in mind that this is the disciple who called himself, "the one whom Jesus loves," and who wrote the account of Jesus' life on earth in the fourth gospel, the gospel of John. He penned those words that all of us know — "For God so loved the world . . ."

The word "love" is probably one of the hardest working words in the English language. The dictionary I consulted had about ten different definitions for it, and it was followed by sixteen entry words — a variety of forms of the word "love."

We use the word in so many ways. For instance I say, "I love chocolate covered peanuts, I love this weather, I love my family, I love my wife, I love God." In each instance the word "love" carries its own meaning. It surely does not mean the same thing, the same degree of intensity when I use it to express my feelings about chocolate peanuts as when I use it to express my feelings for my wife.

As we examined this passage of Scripture we see that love has its origin in God. In verse 7 we read, "Love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God." It is from God who is love that all love takes its source. A.D. Brooke says, "Human love is a reflection of something in the divine nature. We are never nearer to God than when we love. Man is made in the image and likeness of God. Since God is love, for us to be like God, we must also love."

We see, too, that love has a double relationship. In verse 8 we read "Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love. Love comes from God and love leads to God."

It is by God that love is known. In verse 12 we read, "No one has ever seen God; but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."

We cannot see God for He is spirit; what we can see is His effect. We cannot see the wind, but we can see what it can do. We cannot see electricity, but we well know the effect it produces. The effect of God is love. When we know God and accept Him, we are loved. And because

we are loved, we love. This love flows through us and has an effect on others. Then we reach out to others. This love has an effect. It has been said that "a saint is a person in whom Christ lives." We have examples of that in our own time. Such people as Corrie Ten Boom, Mother Theresa and Albert Schweitzer certainly fit this definition of a saint.

And we can often see this kind of love in action around us. Last spring tornadoes wreaked havoc in northeastern Ohio. Homes and businesses were swept away. Three days later three busloads of workers from the Amish and Mennonite communities arrived on the scene to help. They worked tirelessly as long as they were needed. This is an example of how love reaches out to meet a need. This love that we have from God can be shown to others by the effect it produces.

God's love is demonstrated in Jesus Christ. In verse 9 we read, "This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him."

When we look at Jesus we see two things about the love of God. First, it is a love that holds nothing back. God was prepared to give his only Son. Recently, I heard a Sunday School teacher make this statement, "In our human experience there is no grief to compare with the grief that is felt at the loss of a child." God sent His "one and only Son into the world." This was the supreme sacrifice for His love for men.

Secondly, this love of God as demonstrated by Jesus is a totally undeserved love. There is nothing that we can do to earn it. It is given freely. Probably in our human life it can only be compared to the love of parents for their newborn child — a child who has done nothing to merit it and who in no way as yet can return it. When our daughter and her husband brought their new baby home from the hospital, they sat on the front steps with the baby in his carrier between them. They were overwhelmed by the realization that he was theirs — that when they carried him through the door, because of their great love for that new little being, life would never be the same. As our daughter put it, "we couldn't give him back." He was theirs to care for and nurture and love.

So it is with God. He loves us so much that He gives us everything we need, even His only Son.

And this human love we feel is a response to divine love. Verse 19 says, "We love because He first loved us. Our love is a reflection or an image of God's love. Dr. George Buttrick has expressed this in the following:

If God had kept the whole heaven between us and him, if always he had been only ultimate Truth, like snow on some inaccessible mountain, how would we know him to be "good"? Or if he had come near as an angel, how could we have worshipped? What do angels know about human tears and

laughter? If the name is **Jesus**, we can account for the love in us, for our love might then be the broken image of his love.

When love comes, fear goes. Verses 17 and 18: "Love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love."

Fear is the characteristic emotion of someone who expects to be punished. So long as we regard God as the Judge, the King, the Lawgiver, there can be nothing in our heart but fear. From such a God we could expect nothing but punishment. But when we know God's true nature, fear is swallowed up in love. We can have confidence in the day of judgment, whether at the Great White Throne or now.

There was a man whose life was one of great influence on others. He had gone through much suffering and betrayal, and had been tested right down to the core. But a few months before his death, he wrote: "When I look back upon the seventy years of my own life, I see quite clearly that I owe my present inner happiness, my peace, my confidence and my joy to one fact: I am certain that I am infinitely loved by God." If we know this truth, the only fear that remains is the fear of grieving his love for us. Perhaps this is what Paul meant when he said, "The love of God constraineth us."

Finally, the love of God and the love of man are connected. In verse 7 of this passage John says, "Let us love one another, for love comes from God." In verse 11, "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." In verse 20, "We love because he first loved us." And in verse 21, "Whoever loves God must also love his brother." As C.H. Dodd puts it: "The energy of love discharges itself along lines which form a triangle, whose points are God, self and neighbor."

If God loves us, we are bound to love each other. John says, with almost crude bluntness, that a man who claims to love God and hates his brother is nothing other than a liar. The only way to prove that we love God is to love the men whom God loves. The only way to prove that God is within our hearts is to constantly show the love of men within our lives.

A king asked his three daughters how much they loved him. Two of them replied that they loved him more than all the gold and silver in the world. The third and youngest said, "I love you better than salt." The king was not especially elated with her remark and dismissed it lightly as an indication of her immaturity. But the cook, overhearing the conversation, left salt out of the king's breakfast the next morning. He then understood the deep meaning of his daughter's remark, "I love you



so much that nothing is good without you."

The love of God which flows from God to us to others is as salt to food. No relationship is good without it.





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# Ashland Theological Journal

**Ashland Theological Seminary**

Ashland, Ohio

Spring 1987





## PREFACE

This issue of the Journal is as diverse as is our Seminary itself. Included you will find both practical and theological articles, both homiletical and scholarly discussions. The first article is in fact the transcript of Dr. Ernest Boyer's commencement address of last year which is reproduced here by popular request. Following this Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal provides an insightful and scholarly look at management techniques and how they may be used in the Church. This article should also be of real help for our readers involved in pastoral work. The third item in the Journal is a brief essay by the editor on the question which increasingly confronts various Churches - how should we react to the modern plea for inclusive language? Dr. O. Kenneth Walther has provided us with an address he gave in chapel in the fall of 1986 on Acts 26.29. This in turn is followed by a series of historical articles of a more popular nature on Methodist Camp Meetings and Circuit Riders which hopefully will be both informative and somewhat entertaining. The aforementioned articles along with the two articles that follow by Kevin Miller and then by a variety of Evangelical writers are in fact reprinted here by permission because of their timely and useful content. Kevin Miller introduces us to the pitfalls of using fund raising consultants in the Church, and the final article in the Journal reviews American Evangelicalism in the past thirty or so years. Finally, we are pleased to announce a new section has been added to our Journal as of this issue - a book review section. Though very brief in this issue we hope to expand it considerably in forthcoming editions of the Journal. It is our hope that this material will both enlighten and enliven those who read this material as we seek to serve Jesus Christ together.

Dr. Ben Witherington, editor  
Epiphany 1987

Ashland Theological Seminary  
Ashland, Ohio

## ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

Spring 1987

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**A LITTLE LOWER  
THAN THE ANGELS**

**Dr. Ernest L. Boyer  
President  
of  
The Carnegie Foundation for  
the Advancement of Teaching**

**An Address Given For The  
1986 Commencement  
of Ashland Theological Seminary**



First, I wish to congratulate the Class of 1986.

I congratulate you for choosing Ashland Theological Seminary and for completing, with success, your academic program.

Many years ago, I decided that commencement speeches are the least remembered utterances on earth. This fact was painfully driven home one day after I had delivered what I thought was a most effective speech. At the very end a graduate met me on the lawn and said my speech was so moving he had actually been inspired to write a poem. I was, of course, deeply touched until I had read his creative and inspired poem. The young man had written:

I love a finished speaker.

I mean I really do.

I don't mean one who's polished,

I just mean one who's through.

Rather than run the risk of being humiliated once again, I've decided that this morning I'm not going to give a speech at all. Rather, as a substitute, I'd like to give the graduates a kind of "pop quiz" before you are handed your diplomas. And incidentally, the rest of you may take the test as well.

I have just one examination question to submit. I'd like to ask the graduates, if during your seminary days you have begun to understand the sacredness of language?

Language is the centerpiece of this examination.

My grandfather, who lived to be 100 years, was a minister of the gospel, and he preached for 40 years. As a boy I used to hear grandpa's sermons two times on Sunday and at two prayer meetings every week. Grandpa loved to read the Psalms and frequently he quoted that poetic passage which reads: "Man is a little lower than the angels, higher than the rest." In my boyish fantasy I saw it spatially with God, the angels, and men and women on the planet Earth.

As I became older I learned a deeper meaning. We are, "a little lower than the angels, a little higher than the rest." We hold a special position among all of God's creations - in our soul, in our intellect, and also in our use of symbols.

Language is a God-given "miracle." Language is imprinted on the genes. The use of symbols defines who we are and gives dignity and meaning to our lives.

Lewis Thomas, from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, said it all when he wrote that "childhood is for language."

Language begins without a teacher. It is a lesson learned from God.

What sets us apart from all other creatures on God's earth, I believe,

is our capacity effectively to use symbols to capture feelings, nuances, and ideas. This begins not only before the child goes off to school - my wife, who is a certified nurse-midwife, insists that language begins in utero as the unborn infant monitors the mother's voice. I think, in fact, there are data to support that brash assertion. We do know that if you hold your ears and speak you can monitor your own voice through the tissue vibrations of your body. And the child in utero can, I'm convinced, monitor the messages of the mother through the fluid that surrounds it. We also know that the child in utero has a startled reflex to loud noises in the world outside and we also know that the three middle earbones, the hammer, the anvil, and the stirrup are the only human bones that are fully formed at birth.

So I happen to believe my wife is right, as she always is. But for the skeptics here this morning let me say that language certainly begins with the first breath of birth, first with gurgles and then phonemes that are crudely formed and then with utterances that we call words and then sentences that convey subtle shades of meaning. Now that I'm a grandpa and can observe this process more objectively, uncluttered by dirty diapers and burpings late at night, I'm absolutely in awe of a miracle that we take for granted. Exponentially it expands during the first months and years, and to see a little one in the early moments of his or her life begin to shape and form ideas, to me, is the greatest miracle on earth.

Language has a power all its own. It can build and it can tear down as well.

Sticks and stones, can break my bones,  
but names will never hurt me.

I'm suggesting that it is language, not just the soul, that gives us a divine place in the universe and makes us a little lower than the angels. And as you serve your fellow human beings you have a sacred obligation to urge Christians to speak and listen carefully to God, but also to consider the sacredness of language - the God-given gift.

The early Quakers would risk imprisonment and even death because in a court of law they would refuse to swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God. It's not just that they were against swearing - which they were. Their main problem was that by swearing to tell the truth in a court of law they were somehow suggesting that truth was optional in the world outside. Truth, the early Quakers argued, is something that should be assumed, not something that occurs only on a stack of bibles.

The sacredness of language means speaking the truth, but it also means listening as well. Sometimes we can even minister through silence. We live in a world where noise is the norm and we are uncomfortable with

silence. And yet it is the silent spaces that gives meaning to our words.

I've visited Japan on several occasions and been fortunate to see some of the majestic gardens there. I like most the ones where there's a large space, filled with nothing but finely raked gravel and in the middle is a magnificent rock, positioned beautifully in the center. The rock becomes a work of beauty because it's surrounded by the silence of the spaces. Cluttered, it would go unnoticed. In the beauty of the island of the space that's been provided it becomes something to be honored and enjoyed. So it is with words and ideas, too. I say two cheers for silence, which is a means of communication in reverse.

What I'm suggesting is that preparing to minister to others means the discovery of the sacredness of language - the God-given miracle of words. It means a recognition of the need to speak the truth to one another and to listen carefully, as well. This is the ministry of love. It is the key to breeding community in your congregation.

Wayne Booth, of the University of Chicago, wrote on one occasion that all too often our efforts to speak and listen seem to be vicious cycles, moving downward. But Booth went on to say that: "We have all experienced moments when the spiral moved upward, when one party's effort to listen and speak just a little bit better produced a similar response, making it possible to try a bit harder - and on up the spiral to moments of genuine understanding."

I'm suggesting that through language we are a little lower than the angels. And during your ministry it is your sacred obligation to help people listen carefully to each other. I also hope that during your seminary days you have learned the importance of listening, not just to familiar voices, but to cultures other than our own, and to speak your own theory and teaching.

I must tell you that I'm deeply troubled by the harsh, bellicose language in our world today that builds hatred, rather than human understanding.

I do not believe that any of God's creatures, no matter how unloving, should be called a mad or raving dog.

I'm also troubled by the parochialism of the coming generation.

Last year, The Carnegie Foundation surveyed 5,000 college students. Over 20 percent of the students surveyed said they had nothing in common with people in underdeveloped countries, 30 percent said they were not interested in non-western studies, and in our survey of community college students, 40 percent could not locate either Iran or El Salvador on a map.

I'm deeply concerned that our education is becoming more parochial at the very moment the human agenda is more global.

I'm suggesting, in our dangerous, interdependent world it is urgently

important that we learn to listen carefully to others. And those who enter missions have a special obligation - not just to speak, but to listen, too.

Several years ago my wife and I flew from JFK airport in New York to Central America. Traveling to a Mayan village we had traveled a thousand years and a thousand miles. We were visiting our son and his Mayan wife. We spent the evening around an open fire with our new in-laws. I must tell you that during some moments adjusting to that sharp transition I wondered if we had anything in common. What does JFK airport have in common with a Mayan village. But as the embers died I discovered we could communicate with one another, nonverbally in large measure, but verbally as well. We could talk about community since the Mayan villagers have laws and mores and traditions of structure I, too, understood. We could share the beauty of the arts since the Mayan arts have been with us for a millenium or more. We could recall the past - a human characteristic that we assume no other species on God's earth can share - because the Mayans were here a thousand years. We could talk about our relationship with nature because the Mayans live very close to earth and know their dependence on the planet. We could talk about our work, since people all around the globe are engaged in consuming and producing. This was not a foreign land. I discovered another human being with an agenda similar to my own.

Now, it's true the format had its difference to be sure. Take work. My son's father-in-law could explain to me how he walked off into the fields each day and slashed and burned and grew crops and brought them home. It took about an hour to explain how I ran to airports carrying paper from place to place. As he said, "You call that work?" At the most fundamental level we could share our human joys and sorrows, the points at which all humans live.

Can the Christian church bring reconciliation in our country and around the world through our sacred use of language?

I have one final observation.

In America today, it is urgently important that we communicate more effectively. And during your ministry I hope that you will listen to the sacredness of language. In many of the countries where you will serve, the children will be the neglected generation.

During our study of the American high school I became deeply troubled by the malaise among the students.

I was troubled that it is possible for teenagers in America to finish high school yet never be asked to participate responsibly in life, never be encouraged to spend time with older people, never help a child who hasn't learned to read, or even to help cleanup litter on the street. Time and time again, we heard stories about young people feeling unneeded and unconnected.



One student told us that she had a job working at McDonald's. "It's not very exciting, but at least I'm feeling useful."

It's a sad comment that feeling needed is pushing Big Macs.

I was also troubled by the generation gap we found in high schools between the old and the young, and by the sense that we are no longer dependent on each other.

My parents are retired in Messiah Village. The average age is 80 in that community. My father, who is 87, said almost sullenly a few weeks ago, "It's not a big deal to be 80 here." He sort of felt unhonored, like Mr. Dangerfield. No respect. But the beauty of that place is that they also have a day care center there. Fifty 4 and 5 year olds come trucking up each morning, and to add to the excitement the children have an adopted grandparent. They may go in the morning to greet the older person. I think there is something powerful and beautiful about a four-year-old who starts the day by seeing the courage and agony and the determination of someone who is in the sunset of his life. And I think there is something beautiful about an 80-year-old who begins the day by being greeted by a four-year-old who's bright and innocent and filled with vigor for the future. Such connections are vital if the world is to become a healthy place.

In the Carnegie Report we make a very brash proposal. We propose that during their four high school years students volunteer to tutor younger students, to work in the library or in hospitals, museums, nursing homes, day care centers, synagogues or churches. Students could meet the service requirement evenings, during the summer or on weekends.

During one interview I talked to a big six-footer, sixteen years old who said: "Yes, last summer I volunteered in the emergency ward at the local hospital." He said in the evening they brought in a three-year old who had meningitis and the next morning she was dead. Then he looked at me with skepticism and said, as only a grownup can do, "Do you know what it's like to see a little kid die?" He was strong enough, informed enough, emotionally sensitive enough to challenge me on my terms. What he was really saying was, "Have you grown up and do you know what life is like?" I think for teenagers to begin to understand the realities of living is part of learning, too.

I believe a service term for all students is appropriate for college students, too - to help them see connections between the classroom and the needs of people.

Vachel Lindsay wrote on one occasion that

It's the world's one crime - its babes grow dull  
Not that they starve but starve so dreamlessly  
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap.

Not that they serve, but have no God to serve

Not that they die, but that they die like sheep.

I believe our young people should know the tragedy of life is not death, the tragedy is to die with commitments undefined, with convictions undeclared, and with service unfilled.

That completes the examination. Pass your papers to the center aisle.

Have you, during your seminary days, begun to understand the sacredness of language? Have you learned to communicate with God?

And then to communicate, not just with fellow collegians, but also to speak and listen to other cultures and to a sad, needy world? The sacredness of language means learning to listen not just to ourselves, but to others, too.

Thank you very much.

# **MOTIVATIONAL COMPONENTS OF THEORY Z MANAGEMENT: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH**

**By Dr. M.E. Drushal**

## **Abstract**

Motivation is a pervasive theme in organizations. In this paper, major research studies in motivation are highlighted and the characteristics of three management theories are delineated, but the principles of Theory Z are of particular interest. Ouchi (1981), Pascale and Athos (1981), and Peters and Waterman (1982) studied both Japanese and American corporations which utilize Theory Z management. They found common characteristics among these corporations that could have implications for management in the church organization.

Four components of Theory Z management philosophy - leadership, trust, communication, and participative decision making - are examined. The research literature is studied to offer scientific support for the efficacy of utilizing these identified components within the church organization.

In any organization, people are involved; leaders emerge; decisions are made; and products or services result. In the church organization, the motivation and management of people is of paramount concern. The results of the research cited are clear and if integration of these principles were to occur, the church's hierarchical structure would be altered, creating a participative community in ministry.

## **Introduction**

Church organizations frequently squander the full potential of human resources available to them because they appear to lack understanding, direction or vision, and fail to utilize creatively research findings from the social sciences. A similar dilemma can be found in the business community. The inability of manufacturing organizations to channel properly the energies of the workforce has resulted in the failure of American industry to keep pace with Japanese competitors in manufacturing technological products e.g., automobile, camera, television, electronics, and computers.

At the close of World War II, Japanese industry was nearly destroyed. American industrial advisors assisted the Japanese in restructuring their business communities (Lambert, 1982). The Japanese proved to be apt pupils who learned their lessons well, as their industrial recovery has been remarkable. In-

deed, Japanese "productivity has increased at five times the rate of U.S. gains since World War II and is growing at a faster rate each year" (Feverberg, 1981, p.3).

How could the Japanese achieve this industrial coup? One plausible explanation lies in their management philosophy, which has come to be known as Theory Z in this country. Alternately, their industrial advances could be explained by specific cultural components of their society (e.g., the social ranking of people and professions as well as the centrality of religious belief in Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism [Herzberg, 1984]). An additional contributor to their industrial coup could be the large government subsidies that their major export industries have enjoyed. It is likely that all three factors coalesced to produce Japan's recognized leadership among industrialized nations.

American industry cannot imitate Japan's culture, nor is it likely to persuade Congress to enact industrial subsidies. Theory Z management philosophy, however, contains several components that have been adopted in many American corporations. I propose that the church organization has much to learn from the industrial community - both Japanese and American - and should possibly implement some portions of Theory Z principles into its management philosophies.

The purpose of this paper is to examine theories concerning the motivation of workers. Motivational components of Theory Z management philosophy e.g., leadership, trust, communication, and participative decision making, are of particular interest. Through a brief review of the literature, recent research evidence supporting the efficacy of these components in Theory Z will be examined for their implications in management of the church organization.

Drucker (1985) suggests that

management is not restricted to business management, but is central to every institution of society. . . and there are very few, and mostly minor differences between managing a business, diocese, hospital, university, research lab, labor union, or government agency (p. 8—E).

Like Drucker, I believe that managing a church is similar to managing a business. Therefore, a synthesis of Theory Z management principles and social science research results will be provided with reference to the implications for management within a church setting.

Organizations of all types exist to survive and thrive. Evidence of growth in businesses can be determined by an expanded profit margin that results in dividends for the stockholders. The church, however, must maintain attendance and contribution records to quantify its growth, as its primary product is people. How the organization and its people interact can produce growth, maintenance, or decline. Thompson (1967) observes that

the relationship between an organization and its task environment is essentially one of exchange, and unless the organization is judged by those in contact with it as offering something desirable, it will not receive the inputs necessary for survival. (p. 28)

If business or a church is to survive and grow, then the workforce (employed or volunteer) must experience an exchange of monetary resources, values, and



commitment.

All types of organizations must provide a climate of exchange for their constituents if growth is to occur. Peters and Waterman (1982) contend that part of the motivation for growth stems from the workers' sense of contributing to and helping others. (This may be a primary source of motivation or commitment for workers in the church.) They also report that "researchers studying motivation find that the prime factor is simply the self-perception among motivated subjects that they are in fact doing well" (p. 58). Peters and Waterman (1982) describe the management teams of some significant American corporations (e.g., IBM, Hewlett Packard, Proctor & Gamble, Delta Airlines) that understand exchange principles and know how to produce perceptions of success among workers. Their findings, in addition to those of Ouchi (1981) and Pascale and Athos (1981) - even though focused on very different corporate structures - point to similar theoretical principles for effectiveness, success, and excellence (e.g., respect for people, their ideas and contributions to the work environment) and should receive the attention of the student of organizations.

The trite phrase "people are our most important product" remains prevalent in these successful workplaces. Peters and Waterman (1982) assert that in Japan, "treating people - not money, machines, or minds - as the natural resource may be the key to it all. Kenichi Ohmae, head of McKinsey's Tokyo office, says that in Japan, *organizations* and *people* (in the organizations) are synonymous" (p. 39). For the Japanese, workers *are* the corporation and their productivity causes the organization to succeed. This reality forms a concentric cycle for organizational growth. The value placed on workers may be the pivotal issue that separates excellent organizations from mediocre ones, and valuing workers then becomes a motivational issue that affects the well-being of both the organization and the individual.

The church faces the same motivational issues. The relationship among motivation, Theory Z management principles, and recent research findings will be explored in this paper and implications for integration of these principles in the church organization will be suggested.

### **Motivation: The Art Of Management Science**

The primary goal of any organization is continued existence. Regardless of the nature of the organization - school, business, government, or non-profit agency - longevity is sought, and growth (increased profits, giving, and/or attendance, etc.) is desired. Decisions are made by people affecting growth, longevity, and motivation.

While organizations seek longevity and growth, most every worker wants to perform on a "winning team," which for Peters and Waterman (1982) is synonymous with success in the marketplace. One might query, "does success breed motivation in the workplace or does high motivation enable success?" At least two prime research foci appear for the student of organizations: (1) motivation theories as expressed in theories of management, and

(2) the research support for motivational components of Theory Z management e.g., leadership, trust, communication, and participative decision making.

Motivation of workers is a central issue in the management process (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Hoy and Miskel (1982) categorize theories of motivation into two realms - content and process approaches. Content approaches specify "only what motivates behavior. . . specific needs, motives, expectancies, and antecedents to behavior, or [as] they relate behavior to outcomes or consequences" (p. 139). Process approaches "attempt to define major variables that are necessary to explain choice, effort, and the persistence of certain behavior. They attempt to specify how the major variables interact to influence outcomes, such as work effort and job satisfaction" (p. 155). Both of these perceptions contribute to a climate for motivation in the workplace.

## **Content Approaches to Motivation**

Motivation is more complex and pervasive than is addressed in this paper, but it is a central theme in Theory Z management. Hoy and Miskel (1982) define motivation as "the complex forces, drives, needs, and tension states, or other mechanisms that start and maintain voluntary activity directed toward the achievement of personal goals" (p. 137). The manner in which an employee is motivated within the organization will affect job performance (Lippitt, 1948) and employee satisfaction (Mann, Indik, & Vroom, 1963), and will ultimately benefit or inhibit organizational objectives.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of human needs is also relevant to an understanding of motivation. It "assumes a hierarchy of human motives ranging from biological needs through security, love, and belongingness, to ego needs of self-esteem, self-development, and self actualization" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 398), and suggests that lower level needs must be met before higher level needs can emerge. For example, as an individual matures and receives the salary increases to provide a reasonable standard of living, other needs, such as affirmation and new responsibilities may become important. Based on this premise, Herzberg (1959) began to study job attitudes, or satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the resultant human behaviors. He interviewed over two hundred professional people in eleven industries in the Pittsburg area and developed what is known as the two-factor theory or the motivation-hygiene theory.

Hygiene factors are those things about the work environment that must be maintained at a reasonable level so the employee will not become dissatisfied with the workplace. The motivators are identifiable qualities that produce perceptions of professional growth to the employee. Figure 1 lists variables included in the two factors:

MOTIVATORS (The Job Itself)	HYGIENE FACTORS (Environment)
Achievement	Policies and
Recognition for accomplishment	administration
Increased responsibility	Supervision
Growth and development	Interpersonal relations
	Money, status, security

Figure 1. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.  
(Hersey & Blanchard, 1982, p. 58).

Herzberg's theory predicts that a climate conducive to motivation in the workplace will increase the productivity of the employee. With higher output, the worker becomes more productive and satisfied and thus, a more motivated worker. But Drucker (1954) disagrees. He believes that satisfaction is inadequate as a motivator. He states that "responsibility - not satisfaction - is the only thing that will serve to adequately spur an individual to self-motivation" (p. 303). Gellerman (1968) adds his view that "effective motivation depends on effective communication" (p. 36).

Herzberg's findings have been criticized for faulty research design. The use of the critical incidents interview and the fact that the subjects (accountants and engineers) did not represent a diverse geographical sampling raises questions about the generalizability of the findings. However, this was among the early attempts to study motivation in the workplace and could therefore be considered foundational to subsequent research within organizations. Drucker's and Gellerman's criticisms highlight important contributors to motivation not considered by Herzberg but included in Theory Z management: responsibility (leadership) and communication.

Content approaches to motivation assert that each worker has needs, attitudes, and work related issues that affect motivation. Theory Z management philosophy gives credence to these same issues. The church organization often assumes that a worker (volunteer or paid professional staff) has a commitment to the task that supersedes the implications of these research findings. Perhaps this is an erroneous assumption.

### Process Approaches to Motivation

Process theorists are concerned with variables that initiate or sustain motivation within the worker. One such variable is goal setting or decision making. Every individual makes choices. Often these are behavioral choices with purposive intent to effect an outcome. Sometimes choices are unconscious decisions, but to select one direction over another is nevertheless a choice. The establishment of goals, both individually and corporately, involves a decision making process.

Goals represent decisions and choices. Hoy and Miskel (1982) define a goal as "what an individual consciously is trying to do" (p. 161). Dornbusch and

Scott (1975) define a goal as "a conception of a desired end state of an entity" (p. 66). Goals can be personal or organizational, but organizational goals are derived by individuals, who may or may not be able to accomplish the goals that have been established. Drucker (1980) believes that "unless challenged, every organization tends to become slack, easy going, diffuse" (p. 41). So organizational goals are necessary to maintain a focus on a desired result; goals may force evaluation and then analysis of data to produce future goals. In Theory Z type organizations, goal setting and evaluation are accomplished through "a community of equals who cooperate with one another to reach common goals" (Ouchi, 1981, p. 70). Church organizations, however, seldom enter into this goal setting and evaluation process. Dayton and Engstrom (1979) ask and answer their own question: "Why is it that many Christian organizations never get around to expressing their own goals?...fear of failure...and the age-old theological tension between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man" (pp. 55-56). Lack of goal setting leaves the church in a management limbo.

Locke's (1968) goal theory focused on the "relationship between conscious goals and intentions and task performance" (p. 157), and is simply a technique for goal setting. He found that difficult and specific goals constituted a greater challenge and therefore required increased effort for achievement.

Organizational goals represent the decisions of a group of people. Perhaps the establishment and/or evaluation of goals can be the challenge that motivates individuals to greater achievement. But regardless of the outcome in concrete results, an interactive and interpersonal process is utilized to determine and achieve organizational goals. Gellerman (1968) reminds us that relationships between people and groups in an organization "need to be audited, because they can affect the performance and ultimately even the survival of the firm" (p. 255). Thus, the group dynamics or interpersonal relationships of a work group can, through the behavior of individual participants, achieve or inhibit the accomplishment of desired goals.

These interpersonal relationships are the basis for Heider's attribution theory. Heider (1958) and his associates suggest that motivation is a function of interpersonal relationships that affect the work climate.

To observe, identify, and describe actual principles of motivation is an elusive objective. Gellerman (1968) cautions that the word "motivation is a deceptively brief way of expressing a complex reaction to a complex of influences" (p. 34). But motivation is an ever-present reality in the workplace, and it encompasses all facets of societal, organizational, and personal life.

Studies of motivation must also consider historical change. Parsons (1960) observes that in industrial societies, "the essential point at the motivational level is the motivation to achievement in occupational roles devoted to productive function" (p. 140). But in this day, as the United States moves from an industrial era to an information society as Naisbitt (1982) and Toffler (1980) have suggested, the centralized, hierarchial organizational structures (as described by Parsons) will no longer be adequate. The information necessary to make decisions will be available to all workers; "the computer itself will



be what actually smashes the hierarchical pyramid'' (Naisbitt, 1982, p. 281). Naisbitt (1982) says these realities will cause basic changes and development in management theories and practices. This phenomenon is currently evident as Walton (1985) describes

. . . a growing number of manufacturing companies has begun to remove levels of plant hierarchy, increase manager's spans of control, integrate quality and production activities at lower and lower organizational levels, combine production and maintenance operations, and open up new career opportunities for workers. . . In this new commitment-based approach to the work force, jobs are designed to be broader than before, to combine planning and implementation, and to include efforts to upgrade operations, not just maintain them. Individual responsibilities are expected to change as conditions change, and organizational units accountable for performance. With management hierarchies relatively flat and differences in status minimized, control and lateral coordination depend on shared goals, and expertise, rather than formal position determining influence. (p. 79)

If this is happening in business organizations, perhaps leaders in church organizations need to examine their beliefs about workers and attend to alternate management theories (Schaller, 1980).

In summary, the theories of motivation presented herein draw upon several components that influence the management process: the needs of individual workers, the work environment (both tangible and intangible qualities), and the interpersonal relationships through which organizational goals are established and achieved. Each of these motivational attributes is manifest in varying degrees in theories of management.

## **Theories of Management**

McGregor (1960) reminds us that how we manage people depends upon how we view nature and motivation. There are several theories of management and, for comparative purposes, the basic assumptions of each need to be understood. None of the theories selected for review here is considered to be better than the others. Particular situations could occur within the management structure that would make each appropriate in a given setting.

### **Theory X**

McGregor (1960) refers to Theory X as the traditional view of management. This theory makes the following assumptions:

1. People dislike work
2. People must be coerced, controlled, and threatened to achieve organizational objectives
3. Workers prefer direction by others in order to avoid personal responsibility.

Without question, there may be people in the workforce who fit this description. Theory X management requires extrinsic manipulation of the worker to

achieve organizational goals. But there have been "changes in the population at large - in educational level, attitudes and values, motivation, [and] degree of dependence. . ." (McGregor, 1960, p. 43), that have led to another form of management.

## Theory Y

Managers who began to acknowledge some of the personal aspects of workers found Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs to be particularly interesting. As a theory of motivation, Maslow suggested that the basic needs of people must be met before satisfaction through task completion can be achieved. Basic needs include: physiological needs; safety and security; and belongingness, love, and social activity. Other needs include: esteem (personal); self-actualization or self fulfillment (achievement of potential); aesthetic needs; and the need to know and understand. Maslow's work concentrated on meeting the needs of the individual. His theory offers considerable information that could be utilized in organizational relationships to make life more satisfying within the work environment.

The assumptions of Theory Y call for an integration between the needs of the individual and the goals of the organization. As these needs and goals are combined, the theory suggests that the worker will likely achieve greater satisfaction and more personal reward in accomplishment. McGregor (1960) outlines the assumptions of Theory Y:

1. Work is as natural as play or rest
2. People exercise self-direction and self-control to reach objectives once commitment occurs
3. The reward and result of commitment to objectives is achievement
4. People accept and seek responsibility
5. Workers possess the capacity and creativity to seek solutions to organizational problems
6. Modern industries utilize only a portion of the intellectual potential of workers.

Theory Y thus suggests a model of cooperation among workers and managers regardless of status within the corporate structure. Cooperation signifies working together but active participation in achieving results calls for another level of involvement, or Theory Z.

## Theory Z

Ouchi (1981) outlines the attributes of Theory Z. Organizations committed to this theory focus on:

1. Long term employment of workers
2. A balance between organizational controls -  
*explicit* (information and accounting systems, formal planning, management by objectives) and *implicit* (internal communication, always seeking what is best for the company)

3. A company philosophy that incorporates a statement of purpose or objectives for ways of doing business
4. Interdependence within organizational life, relying on trust and achieving consensus among workers
5. Participative decision making, providing for broad communication among workers at all levels, values within the organization, cooperative intent of the firm, development of interpersonal skills to facilitate group decisions, development of trust, maintenance of a strong egalitarian atmosphere.
6. Self-direction of workers as opposed to hierarchical direction.
7. Egalitarian atmosphere that implies trust among workers.

Ouchi (1981) emphasizes Theory Z management's wholistic orientation that incorporates the involvement of workers in every facet of the organization.

I have selected four of the components of Theory Z identified by Ouchi (1981) that have a role in motivation and appear to be significant elements for church organizations. Leadership, trust, communication, and participative decision making have received attention in literature. Theory X, and to some extent, Theory Y, represent authoritarian approaches to management that stimulate "discontent, frustration, and negative attitudes toward leadership" (Rush, 1983, p. 12). And yet church organizations are frequently managed within one of these theories (Schaller, 1980). To better understand the productive organizational climate fostered by Theory Z, further examination of the literature is necessary.

## **Motivational Components of Theory Z and Recent Research**

What does research say to us about motivational management variables in Theory Z as leadership, trust, communication, and participative decision making? Each variable and the literature related thereto will be delineated separately.

### **Leadership**

Lester (1981) states "that managers are necessary, leaders are essential" (p. 868) to conduct the business of any organization. Mintzberg (1973) describes managers as "those people formally in charge of organizations or subunits" (p. 3), while Sayles (1964) says that a manager is one who "has subordinates whom he/she [sic] can direct and over whom he/she [sic] has superior status." (p. 142) Those definitions place emphasis on vertical relationships within the organization. But leadership is often found in "interpersonal behavior, specifically that between the leaders and the led" (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 17).

Katz and Kahn (1978) describe leadership as the "influential increment" (p. 528) among people that is derived more from relational factors than from organizationally appointed positions. Both leaders and managers function within the organization (and one can be the other). "The one quality that more than anything else marks a manager is decisiveness, but. . . [leaders] are often not decisive; they're intuitive; they have a vision" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 37).

**Leadership studies.** Hersey and Blanchard (1982) combine the views of many management writers to define leadership as "the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given

situation" (p. 83). Lester (1981) further delineates leadership "as the art of influencing and directing people in a manner that wins their obedience, confidence, respect and enthusiastic cooperation in achieving a common objective" (p. 868). These definitions offer a classic description of the traditional hierarchical organizational structure that exists in American organizations and churches, where influencing and directing are key terms. How are people influenced in the workplace? Often they are influenced through power exhibited by those in leadership positions.

**Power in leadership.** Etzioni (1961) observes three kinds of power within the organization: coercive, remunerative, and normative:

*Coercive* power rests on application, or threat of application, of physical sanctions such as infliction of pain, deformity, or death. . . *remunerative* power is based on control over material resources and rewards. . . *normative* power rests on allocation and manipulation of symbolic rewards and deprivation through employment of leaders, manipulation of mass media, allocation of esteem and prestige symbols. . . (pp. 5-6).

Organizations that wield coercive power often are institutions of reform such as prisons. In organizations characterized by remunerative power, rewards, both financial and personal, are used to maintain order within the organization. Normative power controls participants through "leadership, rituals, manipulations of social prestige symbols, and resocialization" (p. 40). Etzioni (1961), in fact, notes explicitly that "religious organizations must rely predominantly on normative powers to attain both acceptance of their directives and the means required for their operation" (p. 41). Church leadership, then, strives for control through direction rather than cooperation.

In studies of cooperation and consensus among elites (groups with power), Etzioni (1961) found that "the degree of cooperation between elites. . . is a determinant of the level of effectiveness a organization maintains" (p. 94). He defines six consensus spheres that function within an organization: general values; organizational goals; means, policy, or tactics; participation in the organization; performance obligations; and cognitive perspective. These areas of consensus provide opportunities for shared power.

Salanick and Pfeffer (1977) define power as "the ability of those who possess power to bring about the outcomes they desire" (p. 3). Power in organizations usually manifests itself in budgetary allocations, positions in organizational hierarchy, and strategic decisions (Pfeffer, 1981). Leaders often assert their power or influence within subunits or organizations to accomplish personal or group goals. If subunits achieve consensus, to which there is group commitment, then the subunit achieves additional power within the organization (Pfeffer, 1981). Salanick (1977) defines commitment to a group as "a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his/her actions and through these actions to beliefs that sustain the activities and his/her own involvement" (p. 62).

Leaders in Japanese organizations emphasize shared power among workers and collective work groups (Lambert, 1982). Conversely, hierarchical organizations focus more on power which gives credence to individual achievement and direction of subordinates to accomplish goals.



Stodgill (1974) identifies two types of leadership - participative and directive. Participative leaders encourage group or subunit members' involvement in discussions, problem solving, and decision making while directive leaders expect to play a personal and active role in decisions and believe that group members will accept their decisions. Participative leadership has been found to be more effective than directive leadership in altering group opinions (Mitchell, Smyser, & Weed, 1975). Aspegren (1963) finds participative leadership produced higher levels of group satisfaction and task motivation among subunits. Stodgill (1974) confirms that "research on organizational change is consistent in indicating that followers are more receptive when they participate in planning and implementation" (p. 415).

Theory Z organizations successfully integrate this body of research on leadership. The leadership is participative and values the information gathering, sharing, and problem solving of the workers. Participants in collective work groups develop a commitment to one another and the organizational task, with the end result being satisfaction, productivity, and trust.

### **Trust**

In Theory Z management philosophy, trust involves interpersonal relationships, interdependence of subsystems, ambiguity, constant exchange and communication, as well as an understanding of personal values among group members (DeMente, 1981). Knowing one is valued as a contributing participant of a collective work group breeds a climate for trust within the organization. Sproul (1983) reminds us that

every human being, from the lowest state of unskilled laborer to the highly polished corporate executive, wants to know there is real value in his labor.

To know your labor counts is to be assured that you count. (p. 203)

Trust "is the conscious regulation of... vulnerability to another person" (Zand, 1981, p. 38). Trust often ensues when workers share visions, goals, and alternative solutions to a dilemma. The act of delegation exemplifies trust between individuals and when advice is sought and given, trust is reinforced (Zand, 1981).

But, in a competitive, results-oriented, and bottom-line corporate structure, trust - which implies cooperation - may be only infrequently present. And yet, Paul (1982) writes that "the variables of power, leadership, and trust form an intricate, elusive interweaving of influence that effects us all in organizations" (p. 538). As people explore the possibilities of participative management, these two compatible qualities (trust and cooperation) cannot be ignored. Gibb (1978), in a comprehensive study of trust, suggested that Trust Level Theory (TORI) forms the core of personal and organizational growth. TORI is an acronym for "*trusting* our being and processes, *opening* our lives, *realizing* or actualizing our intrinsic nature and energy, and *interdepending* or interbeing" (Gibb, 1978, p. 20). Gibb (1971) finds that

trust produces trust. People who are trusted tend to trust themselves and to trust those in positions of responsibility. Moreover, the feeling that one is trusted encourages exploration, diversity, and innovation, for the person spends little time and energy trying to prove himself. (p. 86)

Trust, as described by Gibb, is seldom found in hierarchical organizations.

In many hierarchical organizations, however, competition (among workers and other organizations) is a key concept (Katz & Kahn, 1978). People who are competitive (Kelly & Stahelski, 1970) and authoritarian (Deutsch, 1960) do not often find themselves cooperating (trusting others) in a group setting. Competitive and authoritarian workers, therefore, likely do not build a climate of trust within the organization. In Theory Z type organizations, trust among co-workers can be an element that assists in decision making and participation in the organizational process. Without some degree of trust among group members, the achievement of consensus would be unlikely. Without trust, respect, or involvement, participative leaders would have no followers. Managers view trust as a contribution to participation in decision making that increases the likelihood of two-way communication in the work environment (Dickson, 1982).

### Communication

Communication is a complex phenomenon of interaction. Words, the selection of words, tone of voice, and body language, all forge the communication composite. The old phrase "communication forms a two-way street" becomes an accurate observation as it indicates an initiator and a recipient when communication occurs.

Sayles (1964) writes that "organization charts imply that contacts are limited primarily to the lines connecting boxes, but the relationships necessary to get the job done are much more complex" (p. 34). Berlo (1971) illustrates from his research that communication within an organization has both vertical and horizontal dimensions, and when communication occurs on both dimensions, the people establish a climate for mediation of opinions and ideas. Burns (1954) found that managers are in contact with workers 80% of the time, so communications skills are needed in the workplace.

Guetzkow and Simon (1955) developed a network of communication called all channel communication pattern. In this formation (see Figure 2), any person has access to all others in the group.

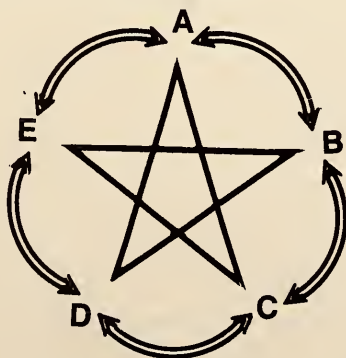


Figure 2. All channel communication network.

From H. Guetzkow, & H.A. Simon, The impact of central communication nets upon organization and performance in task-oriented groups, *Management Science*, 1955, 1, 233-250.

This network provides information flow that could incorporate all three directions of communication - downward, horizontal, and upward (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 440). McClenahan (1979) reminds us that "truly effective communication requires constant exchanges" (p. 75). That is exactly what can occur when all channel communication patterns become the operational mode in an organization.

Although I found no description of communication patterns of Theory Z organizations in literature, they might resemble the all channel (Guetzkow & Simon, 1955). The fact that recognized leadership in these patterns is not centralized could be related to the job satisfaction, high morales and productivity found in Theory Z managed organizations.

### **Participative Decision Making**

The composite in Theory Z management philosophy of leadership, trust, and communication comes to fruition in participative decision making. Decision making is frequently a political process which can involve a single individual or a group of individuals in a collective manner. Participative decision making cannot be viewed as some magic technique that rights all corporate wrongs, but its successful utilization among excellent corporations may serve as a model for organizations of all types.

Pascale and Athos (1981) find that the Japanese prefer to invest time and energy in building a support for their decisions, because they "recognize that many elements of an organization will be more committed to a decision if they take part in it" (p. 174). The involvement of a number of people does elongate the lead-time necessary in the decision making process.

Sayles (1964) says that decision making "is a slow process" (p. 217). Making decisions in a participative manner signals group involvement. Collins and Guetzkow (1964) describe three factors that assist productivity of group decision making: resources, social motivation, and social influence. By combining group resources of information and judgements, random error diminishes. If an individual is socially motivated, then these motivators (prestige, peer pressure, etc.) will not function unless other people are present to observe the phenomenon. An individual's social influence within a group increases if his or her contribution is supported by evidence, logically presented and consistent with past experience.

Participative decision making can be developed in an organization whose leadership values input and involvement of its workers, and develops a degree of trust through communication. A frequent outcome of participative decision making is consensus among the group. This does not mean that consensus results without some conflict. Hoffman, Harburg, and Maier (1962) suggest, however, that conflict among group members creates a greater number of alternative solutions to the problem. Effectiveness of the group in decision making can be enhanced or inhibited by relationships among the group (Altman & McGinnis, 1960; Ghiselli & Lodahl, 1958; Haythorn, Couch, Haefner, Langbaum & Carter, 1956; Schutz, 1955).

The research on decision making supports the group process in achieving consensus. Theory Z type organizations utilize group involvement to share in-

formation, resources, planning, and problem solving that results in consensus. Collins and Guetzkow (1964) found that productivity is enhanced by group decision making and certainly the economic growth of Japanese industry is evidence of the usefulness of participative decision making.

In summary, the motivational components of leadership, trust, communication, and participative decision making are well represented in the research findings. Leaders assert their influence in guiding the organization. Whether leaders are directive or participative (Stogdill, 1974) likely contributes to building a climate for trust and communication networks. Leaders employ participative decision making when they desire input and involvement of their people. These motivational components are found in organizations and are implicit in the church.

### **Implications for the Church Organization**

The focus of this paper has been the motivation of workers within the organization to accomplish organizational tasks. Its purpose was to explore the research literature on motivation and theories of management affecting the worker and to determine implications for the church organization. Components of Theory Z management philosophy e.g., leadership, trust, communication, and participative decision making, were of particular interest because of their role in the motivation of the worker. Although this paper has focused on Theory Z type organizations, this philosophy should not be viewed as a system to be idolized or idealized. Rather, "the Japanese have achieved their current level of manufacturing excellence mostly by doing simple things but doing them very well and simply improving them" (Hayes, 1981, p. 57). For the church organization, that simple thing in a phrase could become the motto "pursue excellence in ministry - attend to people."

How does the church attend to people - its primary product? People associate themselves with a church for a variety of reasons, but a primary purpose for many is to have their spiritual needs met. There are indications that people do have needs (Maslow, 1943) that a church can meet, but the church organization must realize that spiritual needs cannot be met in a vacuum. Attention must be given to all developmental areas (physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual) if the person is to become self-motivated and/or self-actualized. The quality of the environment (both tangible and intangible [Herzberg, 1959]) also occupies a role in this process.

Church leaders might utilize a Theory X (McGregor, 1960) approach to management and exert its normative power (Etzioni, 1961) for acceptance of its direction. In such cases, controlling people and meeting spiritual needs only become the legitimate rationale for ministry, but this may also yield a stunted or limited view of the mission of the church. If, however, one holds the belief that the mission of the church is broader than just meeting the spiritual needs of people and that people can be more than followers, then leaders in the church should consider another approach to managing people.

A Theory Y (McGregor, 1960) approach in attending to or managing people fosters an integration of the needs of people and the goals of the organization. The assumptions outlined for Theory Y management merge the commitment



of workers with the goals of leaders to form a climate where cooperation and trust can grow. If leaders believe that workers have intellectual capacity to create solutions to organizational problems and if they give them the freedom (trust) to do so, it is likely that self-direction in problem solving will give rise to commitment to the task with the end result being the accomplishment of a goal through a cooperative effort. Gibb (1981) suggests that trust encourages workers to explore and innovate, both of which are qualities essential for workers seeking avenues of new ministry opportunities within the church.

If leaders in church organizations have a passion for the pursuit of excellence in ministry, however, they cannot be content to merely attend to or manage people. Instead, they will participate with them in the process of ministry; they will not merely hand down edicts for implementation. Leaders in Theory Z type organizations expend countless hours in interaction to determine direction for the organization - *together*. They are participative (Stogdill, 1974) and encourage one another in problem solving and decision making. Throughout this managerial process, workers are respected, valued and trusted. Participation in the decision making process requires a communication flow that will simultaneously solve the problem and achieve high morale (Bavelas, 1962; Guetzkow & Simon, 1955; Leavitt, 1969). The research literature describes communication patterns that result in problem solving *and* high morale, but cautions that more time is required in the accomplishment of the task. The church organization should examine its priorities in communication and select appropriate patterns for communication.

Decisions made participatively require time, group involvement (communication), trust (cooperation), and an egalitarian atmosphere among workers to achieve consensus. Consensus may not be achieved without conflict, but the ensuing discussion will often produce alternate solutions for the problem (Hoffman, Harburg & Maier, 1962).

In summary, the church organization has at least three options in attending to or managing its people - control (Theory X), cooperation (Theory Y), or participation (Theory Z). The managerial choice should be a conscious decision based upon views of motivation and human nature (McGregor, 1960).

The church organization is generally hierarchical with the power for decision making resting at the apex (Gangel, 1970). The research literature examined in this paper supports the efficacy of participative management (Theory Z) and the development of trust and communication as a result of these relationships. The leadership in the church should consider the personal and organizational objectives that could be accomplished by adopting a participative approach to management. The resultant organizational structure would more equitably disperse responsibilities in the church and would consequently contribute to shared power in the decision making. This would increase a commitment-based approach to the motivation of workers and result in accomplishment of the mission of the church. Adoption of this concept, however, would likely create significant change in the structure of most church organizations.

One can only speculate what might emerge if churches adopted a participative management philosophy. Perhaps, as Walton (1985) suggests, the organizational

pyramid might be flattened with the result being more workers and fewer spectators in the church decision making processes. If the church is to accomplish its mission - evangelizing, ministering, meeting people's needs - people must be managed and motivated to pursue the task.

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# LINGUA FRANKLY—INCLUSIVE AND PERSONAL

by Dr. Ben Witherington

The discussion of the importance of language has in recent years become something of a cause celebre in numerous academic disciplines. When we consider the attention now given in philosophy to linguistic analysis, or the continued detailed discussions in biblical studies on the 'semantics of biblical language' (as James Barr puts it), or the insistence amongst experts in civil law of the need to better define terms, or the now aging dictum of Marshall McLuhan that the 'medium is the message', it is easy to see the pre-occupation with words and their meanings, at least in scholarly circles. This concern, however, is by no means confined to the ivory tower, as the various churches of America have discovered, because we are now also in the midst of revising prayer-books, lectionaries, Bible translations, hymns and statements of faith. There is obviously profound interest in what sort of flesh the Word and the words of the Christian faith ought to be wearing.

Obviously one of the major stimuli to this reevaluation has been the feminist movement within the church, and so in the context of the church the discussion has largely centered on the use of gender specific language both of human beings and of God. This ongoing discussion has been a helpful one and largely a healthy one as words, of course, only have meaning in contexts, and it is ever needful to re-express the truth once given in new ways so that modern people may both hear and heed it in their own context. Since various churches now have new lectionaries that are the product of such reflection, it would be useful to do some theological stock-taking on this whole matter, before we also have various new hymnals and Bible translations.

I remember a conversation I once had with Dr. Bruce Metzger at Princeton, then chairman of the RSV translation committee. He stressed, as I remember, the need to avoid rewriting history, but at the same time the need for inclusive language in the human discussion. For Metzger this meant that while the RSV would be in the business of using terms like humanity, or people instead of mankind, to translate words that were intended to be gender inclusive, he would not sanction any translation of references to the deity, or to Jesus or even to humans that did not reflect what the original author intended to say. In short, there was to be no translation that was not faithful to the intent of the author - however patriarchal his own language might be. Behind this view there seemed to be the axioms that a) to de-sexualize the language was to

denude it of some of its personal content; and b) to change the language amounted to an attempt to change the concepts the author meant to convey (however misguided some might think him to be). This amounted to an attempt to rewrite or even censor history. It did not merely amount to an attempt to translate biblical ideas into good modern English, so that those ideas might be heard and considered. It is entirely possible that I have read more into my conversation with Dr. Metzger than it warranted, and if so I and not he should be faulted for any errors in the explanation above. However, if what has been said has any merit, then it leads to some important conclusions.

Firstly in regard to the matter of sexual language, several important things need to be asked. Is it necessarily the case that the use of sexual language to refer to deity or humanity is necessarily sexist (by which I mean showing sexual prejudice or bias)? This question I address especially to those who insist that we must use language such as creator, redeemer, sustainer, rather than Father, Son, Spirit, or chairperson rather than chairman or chairwoman. Is the problem here with the use of gender language *altogether*, or rather the use of exclusively male gender language to refer to deity and humanity? If it is the latter then the problem is not with sexual language per se.

To pursue this a bit further, does not the failure to use sexual language of humanity or deity tend to depersonalize that language? Yet one would think that it is crucial that biblical people convey the message that God is a personal being, as we are. If there is anyone who should be opposed to the depersonalization of our world, it surely ought to be those who profess allegiance to a biblical heritage. What does it mean to be created in the image of God (both male and female equally so) if it does not at least entail the capacity for deeply personal relationships of love both with our God and with each other? I suspect that at the root of some of the drive for depersonalized language in religious contexts is a faulty theological anthropology.

By this I mean, it seems to be assumed that sexuality is not an essential and significant part of our personhood. To put it another way, it is assumed that humanity can be defined adequately quite apart from its sexuality. I suspect that this is an overreaction to gender stereotyping, and as such needs to be brought back in line with a more biblical view of human sexuality, and also of human beings as psychosomatic wholes. Whether we are happy with the fact or not, we are not persons apart from our sexual identity because our sexual makeup is part of that identity. It does not follow from this that there must be some rigid stereotyping of roles. But there must be respect for, expression of, and not denial of our sexual makeup. The equality of men and women in Christ does



not lie in the fact that they are exactly the same in all regards, but that they are equally created in God's image. If there is anything to be deduced from the Genesis stories about male and female it is that they are equal to but not exact duplicates of one another. The complementary nature of male and female is, of course, most evident in the area of sexual sharing, and any attempt to belittle or deny this inherently complementary structure to human sexuality will lead not to a more egalitarian view of marriage, but to a trivializing of any such egalitarian view. People who are equals can accept each other's differences and even appreciate them. The balancing act that we must be engaged in is neither to slight the equality in all that means (equality in marriage, ministry, work) nor to deny the differences.

This task must also be reflected in our use of language in Church contexts. If a woman chairs a committee then by all means let her be called a chairwoman - not a chairperson. Similarly with a man. Again, if we are translating a Bible verse, or writing Sunday school literature, or even praying a prayer when we refer to a mixed group of men and women, let us call them humanity, or human beings, not mankind. Inclusive language should entail the avoidance of gender specific language when we do not have a gender specific group. Surely this is simply a matter of fairness, and should be implied in any commitment to inclusive language. But a commitment to fairness and inclusive language does not need to entail a commitment to depersonalized language. I fear that the use of depersonalized language in religious contexts will only continue to trivialize the importance of human sexuality for human personality, and in the end will do no service to the cause of true equality in all the spheres that men and women both rightly belong - whether in ministry, or in marriage, or elsewhere.

This leads me to a few reflections on the use of inclusive and personal language of the deity or the Christ. Here the same concerns apply. Sexual language is the most personal language we have to speak of human personalities. Certainly it is the position of the Christian faith that God is the ultimate person - from whom all persons and personhood comes. It would be a mistake to use language of God that suggests that the Deity is somehow less than personal. Whether one calls God Father or Mother or both, any of these options are infinitely more personal and therefore more preferable than Creator, Sustainer, etc. God is supremely to be identified as a person, not merely as a fulfiller of some role (whether it be creating, redeeming, etc.). His personhood logically and theologically precedes his activity. The often maintained objection that using sexual language of God may be dangerous and lead people to think of God as a sexual being (a male or female specifically) seems

to me to be based on an unwarranted fear. I can think of no one who as an adult actually concludes God is a male simply because Jesus taught us to call him Abba, Father.

Some scholars at this point have wanted to add certain reservations about calling God Mother, not because they are sexists, but for serious theological reasons. There is, for instance, the fact that, at least according to Christian tradition in the birth narratives, Jesus had an earthly mother but no earthly father. Because of this many have argued that it may even be inappropriate to call God Mother precisely because it would have been both inappropriate and misleading for Jesus to do so. It might also amount to a trivialization of the role of one of the most important of female figures in the Bible - Mary. Not only because of concerns about ecumenical relations, if Mary's role is neglected or dismissed, but also because Jesus gave us a precedent of modeling our prayer life on his and calling God Abba, many who are committed to inclusive and personal language (such as myself) have demurred from breaking with 2,000 years of Church practice at this point. It seems there is more to be lost than gained by such a break. In regard to calling the Holy Spirit a she, there seems to be no theological reason why this could not be done and be theologically proper. Some, however, have been hesitant on this point precisely because one of the early and heretical misperceptions about the Trinity was that it involved God the Father, Jesus the Son, and a Heavenly mother. The concept of a Holy Family in heaven, and thus tri-theism, not monotheism, was a charge Christians had to defend themselves against at various points.

Finally there is the matter of how Jesus is referred to. Some are objecting to calling him Lord, or at least calling God Lord. Jesus was in fact a male. His humanity was real and included masculine gender. For this reason alone there should be no hesitation to use such language of Jesus. Unless one holds to some sort of docetic Christology, that suggests that Jesus was not truly human, or truly male, there should be no problem with the use of such language of the Son. Using it of God, however, is a different matter. For those who object to the use of gender language of God altogether, this usage will also be found unacceptable. However, if in principle one has no problems with the use of gender language of God (whether male or female) the term Lord should not cause difficulties, anymore than King or other gender terms.

It appears then that Shakespeare was not quite right when he suggested that a rose by any other name would still be the same rose, at least when we were talking about transcendent realities. Precisely because God is invisible and not subject to empirical analysis like a rose, there is always a danger of our recreating the Deity in our own image. This is equally

a danger for those who oppose or favor the use of gender language of God. It is my hope that as we put together new hymnals, and lectionaries, and translations, we will heed some of Metzger's warnings and not try to rewrite history, or depersonalize God. Our lingua frankly matters - if we would be faithful to the concepts and persons that lie behind biblical language. The cause of the full equality of male and female should entail the use of inclusive language but does not need to depersonalize the Deity, or desexualize humanity in the process. After all it is creation and creature which are being renewed and redeemed, (not replaced with some *tertium quid*) by the work of Christ.

# THE LAST WORD

by Dr. O. Kenneth Walther

Paul replied: "Short time or long - I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

Acts 26:29

This verse constitutes Paul's last recorded words spoken in Palestine. Here is his final hearing before Herod Agrippa II and Festus, Paul makes his last stand before being sent off to Rome. He addresses those in the audience hall of ancient Caesarea and his audience of readers today with a most intriguing climactic sentence: "Short time or long - I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

As it stands, this final statement is a remarkable example of enthusiastic Christian zeal and genuine Christian courtesy. There is nothing abrasive, over-zealous, obnoxious or repugnant here. Despite his unjust imprisonment for two long years at Caesarea, and surely after receiving some cruel physical as well as mental abuse by corrupt Felix, he finishes his final speech of self-defense with a personal invitation to Herod Agrippa and others present at the court appearance to soberly reflect on both his life and his words. One can only suspect that this earnest, yet tactful, plea made by the apostle induced Herod Agrippa to take yet a second look at the sincerity and commitment of the prisoner standing before him.

Just as the audience with the king and the other nobles had begun with Paul lifting one manacled hand to gain their attention, Acts 26:1, we ought to picture Paul here raising the same hand at the conclusion of this imperial interview. The intriguing question is: Why does he here mention his chains which earlier he had already displayed openly and which must have been obvious to everyone present? And what does Paul mean by the final phrase "except for these chains?"

I shall try to provide three brief suggestions, offer a personal illustration and give three key words on which to hang the three suggestions. Paul's chains are at once restrictive, redundant, and yet redemptive. The chains are referred to by Paul must have a special significance. The Greek word **desmos** meaning chain or bond appears eighteen times in the New Testament. Thirteen of these eighteen appearances may be directly attributed to Paul. For Paul this is an undeniably crucial word.

But let us look at the first suggestion for the special significance of the word "chains" here in Paul's last recorded statement in Palestine.



First, "except for these chains" might mean, and here I am admittedly paraphrasing Paul: "Well, thank goodness these chains are not your lot, O King Agrippa, or yours too, Festus. For I am not able to move about, but you are!"

Read this way Paul's last words may have initially surprised the hearers. For surely Paul recognized the apparent incongruity of appealing to King Agrippa and the others present to experience spiritual freedom - a real theological liberation, where there is neither Greek or Jew, slave or free, male or female, while he himself stood conspicuously in chains before them.

For Paul chains were restrictive and limiting. Could it be that Paul would wish no hurdle or handicap to be placed in the king's path to keep him from joyously discovering for himself the experience of faith in the Lord of the universe - the Saviour of mankind - Jesus Christ? Do you remember that first flush of faith when you first believed? No one - nothing could distract you. You knew; you believed; you trusted; your faith walk commenced at that very moment. Later there would be hurdles and hazards and handicaps. But there is no place for them when faith is first fresh and green and rooting. Could Paul be wishing for Agrippa such a ripe opportunity to experience for himself such a fresh, personal discovery without distraction and diversion?

Chains are restrictive is surely what Paul is implying here. And he would wish no impediment to stand in the king's way for Agrippa was already on the verge of making a decision based on Paul's long self-defense and personal appeal to him. In no way would he want Agrippa burdened with any weight or restricted by any barrier to outright discovery of the living Lord.

On the other hand, for Paul the limitations created by the chains caused him to reflect personally that no situation is ever so hopeless, no individual is ever so helpless, no occasion is ever so filled with hurting that God cannot be present with the one who suffers and yet endures. In his great prison epistle - Philippians - Paul has confided openly: "...for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all things through him who gives me strength," (Philippians 3:12-13). Surely Paul became a living example of an individual equipped by God to overcome incredible obstacles. Undoubtedly the Roman court at Caesarea must have been impressed by the sheer courage and tenacity of this man in chains.

I believe that there is another dimension to Paul's use of this concluding phrase "except for these chains." I can hear Paul asserting that these

chains are redundant, or really necessary, even embarrassing, yet not without an ultimate purpose. Again, allow me to paraphrase Paul here. He could be saying: "I didn't really need these chains for I've travelled and spoken openly and freely in a large part of the Roman Empire, but my period of internment here at Caesarea has caused me to experience some things I would not trade. Although these chains have pushed me beyond all reasonable levels of tolerance and endurance, what an experience this has been for me! Don't you feel sorry for me, O Agrippa, or you Festus, for these are *my* chains!"

In Philippians Paul has expressed his outright conviction of God's purpose in letting him experience the depths of imprisonment. "Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly (Philippians 1:12-14).

Have you ever been confined in one place for two years? Or have you found yourself in a tight spot for an indefinite period of time? Only then can you possibly relate to Paul's situation. How well I recalled the line of that great hymn "Once to Every Man and Nation" which goes "New occasions teach new duties" when one night in the summer of 1985 I boarded the night train from Johannesburg to Durban in South Africa. I had just begun the long trip cooped up in a train compartment with five other men. When it came time to sleep our seats were adjusted so that three bunks were suspended on each side of the tiny compartment. There was barely room to crawl in and I felt fortunate to have a lower bunk. I don't think I ever felt more cramped or confined in my life. I laid my head not on the pillow provided but on the leather shoulder bag I'd been carrying with me for some six weeks in Africa. It was filled with several dozen pieces of priceless Palestinian pottery, some my own, and some from the Ashland Theological Seminary collection, which I had been using in my lectures at various Bible schools and seminaries in East and Central Africa. This indeed was one new occasion in which I could hardly see anything new and lasting occurring. But God in his providence placed in that compartment a gentleman considerably my senior who must have noted my uneasiness and my over-protection of my shoulder bag. He tried in a series of indirect and finally direct questions to ascertain why I didn't just put the bag up above where it would be out of the way, and even more pointedly, what was so important about that bag anyway that I'd even sleep with it for a pillow? Finally, I decided to just tell him that it contained a quantity of old pieces of Palesti-

nian pottery thinking that that would turn him off. But instead my response only sparked his enthusiasm and his outright excitement. He was quickly up and out of his berth and beside me almost begging me for a look inside. I learned that he had taught ceramics in England for over twenty-five years and was on his way to Pietermaritzburg to open his own shop. As I watched him tenderly handle each piece during a period of three or four hours, I also discovered that he was related to the famous Doulton family of the Royal Doulton China dynasty in England. Soon the other men in the compartment were bending over to look down at the pottery collection. Two soldiers, a dentist and a student on break from the University of Durban and Mr. Doulton were my audience that night. And they heard not only about Palestinian pottery, but about my life and witness. I had felt helpless and lonesome when I first boarded that train. I had secretly asked: "Why me, Lord, here on this night train?" But you see that experience with that unexpected audience became a new occasion and even a great occasion and surely one of the most unforgettable occasions of all my time in Africa. I simply would not have traded that night's experiences for anything. I learned in that experience to listen to Paul's "except for these chains." Chains are not without positive fallout. Paul had planned to go to Rome as a missionary evangelist; he was taken to Rome as a prisoner defending the faith before Caesar himself. Indeed, "new occasions teach new duties." What a remarkable learning experience was that unconventional compartment on the night express to Durban.

Finally, I believe I can hear Paul saying with reference to his chains: "I accept and even hold up for you these chains since they are God's redemptive symbol for you and others. Yes, these chains are God's mark of a redemptive process at work." Paul again has expressed this aspect of his chains so candidly in the Epistle to the Philippians. "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one many for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved - and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have" (Philippians 1:27-30).

Jim Elliott, one of the five missionaries martyred by the Auca Indians, wrote in his diary: "He is no fool who loses what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Following Jesus involves as costly discipleship. Paul was aware that his chains were part of that redemptive act of suf-

fering and humiliation which took place in the sacrifice and death of Jesus Christ. As a proud Pharisee Paul had long before been broken in pride and in religious spirit. But he was broken only to be reborn and reshaped for service to Christ and His Church. Chains are clearly a symbol of submissive brokenness in the life of the prisoner. So, too, the chains that come into our Christian life today may impede our spiritual progress, may cause us varying degrees of inconvenience, and can even create impossible demands which would literally break us. But with Paul we need to see obstacles as opportunities for deeper spiritual growth and commitment. Paul, despite his many chains in life, never gave up. He looked to Jesus - the author and perfecter of the faith. He participated in the struggle for faith. He experienced the redeeming work of sharing with Christ and others the unfinished task of evangelizing. Paul's living example of dealing with his chains witnessed to Herod Agrippa and his court on that so long ago and it offers us a challenge in our Christian walk even today.



# CIRCUIT RIDERS AND CAMP MEETINGS

by Dr. Ben Witherington

## 1. Periodic Panaceas

Circuit riders and camp meetings - these were the staple items in the diet of the Methodist Church during the time of its most spectacular growth, the 19th century. Since we are now asking ourselves how we may once again grow, it may prove useful to examine the means used in previous eras. Thus, in this series we will focus on two means once used to promote church growth in the hopes that they may yet again lead us down the right path.

The first thing one notices about circuit riders and camp meetings is how intermittent their presence was. A family, even in the heyday of camp meetings would not likely have gone to more than two a year. Circuit riders, especially west of the Appalachians, were unlikely to see any given settlement more than once a month, and many had two month circuits. This suggests that the effect circuit riders and camp meetings had on members' spiritual formation was that of a catalyst or rejuvenator.

Outside the major cities, especially in the first half of the 19th century, people got their religion in strong and powerful, but periodic, doses. The circuit rider knew that every sermon had to be "preached for a verdict" and every camp meeting had to be treated as a golden opportunity to reach the people for Christ. This produced a religious fervor in the traveling preacher that often reached fever pitch. When one is convinced that but for *this* one sermon or *this* one camp meeting, souls are on the way to hell, it tends to make one take the task at hand very seriously.

There was not a lot of variety in camp meeting preaching, but there was earnestness. There was a concentration on conversion or revival preaching, not on nurture or how to live the day to day Christian life. Yet, at the end of the camp meeting week, the family went back to their farm and would be left "to work out their salvation with fear and trembling" on their own.

Doubtless, this was a lopsided approach but it certainly produced results. Today's preaching tends to focus mainly on nurture and growth. We seem to assume that we are preaching to the *converted* who already know the essentials of how to come to Christ, to experience the new birth, to be, as Wesley said, "an altogether and not just an almost" Christian.

Perhaps we preachers fear it might be taken as an insult to tell longtime Church members, who are decent and honest folks, that even they must be born of God. Whatever the reasons for the insufficient stress today on conversion and justification, it may be time for the pendulum to swing back to these basics of the faith. To our laudable stress on sanctification and Christian growth must once more be added a call to the crisis experience which brings about new creatures in Christ. Such a stress may again bring new life to Methodism.

## **2. The Long and Winding Road**

Long before Peter Cartwright was born, and before Francis Asbury mounted his first horse, there were already circuit riders in this country who called themselves Methodists. It appears that Methodism really got its permanent start here when various Irish Methodists, such as Robert Strawbridge, immigrated to the U.S. They settled up and down the east coast from New York to Frederick County, Maryland. I use the word 'settled' loosely, for persons like Strawbridge, once they built a home for their families, were soon out on the long and winding road.

The roots of Methodist circuit riding stretch back into the 1760s and before that if one counts the work of George Whitefield, before that. The first preachers were neither ordained clergy nor even authorized or appointed by Wesley.

Thus, when Asbury arrived in 1771 with Richard Wright he found a movement already in motion. Between the time of his arrival and the 1784 Christmas Conference, Asbury spent his time organizing and consolidating, correcting and regulating "the connexion" of Methodist lay preachers who were out there doing their own thing. With the exception of the Revolutionary War years, he rode 4000 or more miles a year on horseback surveying the work of the circuit riders. No one could match Asbury for traveling zeal. Methodist preachers came to accept his leadership probably because he made so many sacrifices to build up and organize the connection.

Some circuit riders did approach Asbury's traveling record. James Finley of Ohio rode to 32 places in one month covering numerous counties. He would minister to as many as 1000 people on a given trip.

To say the least, circuit riders were rugged individualists. Thus, Asbury's organizing efforts were made difficult by the fact that they did not like being told what to do or how to do it. When Asbury went to see Strawbridge to suggest he stop serving the Lord's Supper until ordination became a reality, Strawbridge was outraged. However, he apparently just smiled and went on his way doing just as he had done before. But in time, all came to respect Asbury as the master organizer

of American Methodism. By his hands, the church, with ordained clergy, became a reality in 1784 and moved toward the 19th century.

### 3. Colorful Characters

Methodist circuit riders in the 19th century were by no means alone on the backwoods trails. There were Presbyterians and Baptists who rode the circuits. But only Methodism had the connectional system that made possible getting the maximum benefit out of circuit preaching and, later, camp meetings.

It has been said, "The Methodists preached a message to the common man and used the common man to preach it." The feeling on the frontier was that Methodist preachers were "one of us." They could identify with the hardships of life endured in the wilderness. For whatever reason, Methodists did not follow the route of the Presbyterian early in the 19th century, that is, insist on a highly educated and more stationary clergy. The result was that Methodism reached more people and identified with those people perhaps better than any other Protestant group at that time. Indeed, Methodists were famous and infamous for the lengths they would go to reach a settler.

Richard Nolley was one famous for finding the isolated settlers west of the Appalachians. He once came upon a family just unpacking their wagon. Recognizing the black hat and long black riding coat, the settler exclaimed, "What, another Methodist preacher! We left Virginia and Georgia to escape the Methodists!" Nolley replied, "You had better make peace with the Methodists - there will be some in both heaven and hell!"

Without question circuit riders were often colorful characters. Take Lorenzo Dow of Connecticut who liked to stand in the pulpit and proclaim the latest news from hell, or James Axley, a ventriloquist, who often liked to have a dialogue from the pulpit with an imaginary person seated in the back pew. Once he tried this at General Conference with good results. By throwing his voice, he had an imaginary speaker complain that too many Methodist preachers were dressed up like dandys. Axley himself turned around and surveyed the various preachers dressed in fine clothes. He then answered the imaginary complainer, "If you please, sir, we will just drop the subject." But the point was made.

What we discover about circuit riders is that they were the only "show" in town and if showmanship could draw a crowd, then they were happy to be "fools for Christ." To lonely people in isolated areas, they were one part newspaper, one part entertainment, one part tall-tale teller, and of course, one part preacher. In short, they were a breath of fresh air, a moral uplifter, and a bit of all things to all people.

Circuit riders knew they had a captive audience. Thus, Benjamin Abbott would say from the pulpit, "Lord, begin the work now, begin it in this place, begin just there" and he would point his long finger at a particular member with telling effects.

#### 4. "A Hit Dog Hollers"

There were various ways the circuit riders produced the effects they did on an audience. Sometimes it was the message, sometimes the medium. Thus, we hear of James Finley banging on the door of a wilderness home in foul winter weather. The mistress of the house was not predisposed to admitting the soaking stranger, but she finally consented to allow him to warm his hands by the fire. Once safely in front of the fire, Finley began singing one powerful hymn after another in a deep, rich voice. By the time he had finished his third hymn, the lady told her servants to bed down the horse and feed the preacher well. This was 'singing for your supper' - 19th century style.

Consider the case of the revolutionary soldier who went to hear a particularly loud, gravelly-voice Methodist preacher. After a few minutes of thunder from the pulpit, he cried out from the last bench, "Quarter, quarter, I never heard such canonading as this; I yield, I yield!" With these words he came running to the altar. The means might be grating, the message blunt (repent or go to hell), but it was effective. People were forced to make a decision about the direction of their life, and their priorities.

Then there was William McKendree, elected in 1808 as the first native American Methodist Bishop. McKendree had served in the Continental Army, was converted in 1787, and was sent to Kentucky in 1799 to supervise the Methodist work there. McKendree knew the seamier side of frontier life and had a real nose for graft and corruption. When he saw a shyster in his congregation whom he knew was taking advantage of vulnerable settlers, he would preach about *his* sin of extortion, theft, or fraud. One suspect in question came unglued and shouted out, "Even if I did sell them corn for a dollar a bushel, I gave them a year to pay for it!" This came to be called "a hit dog hollers." The direct method had convicted another soul.

Finally, the mere presence of some circuit riders made a lasting impression. In 1799, Jesse Lee of North Carolina fame and three other preachers went to the general store after Annual Conference and all stood on the same feed scale. The total - 976 pounds - nearly 250 pounds per man. I am reminded of the words of a former luminary in our Conference who once said, "Whenever I want to see a big man, I just look in the mirror."



Many circuit riders were big men - most produced big effects. But it was not without a high cost. In the first 100 years, the average age of mortality for circuit riders was in the 40s. During Asbury's tenure as Bishop, the salary was \$64 per year across the board from Bishop to the newest preacher. Here were preachers who gave all in the service of their King. Their earthly rewards may have been few, but their heavenly reward made it all worthwhile.

## **5. The First Camp Meetings**

In 1796 a cry had gone up in both Europe and America - 'Let us pray for revival!' After the Revolutionary War the churches were noted for their coldness, both physical and spiritual. Thus there was a great need for revitalization and when it came in 1797, it came with a bang. In part, revival through camp meeting was made possible thanks to two treaties with the Indians which made travel and open air meetings relatively safe as far west as the Mississippi.

The man usually credited with beginning the revival was a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian named James McGready. He was rough and ready; not a polished preacher. McGready stressed the new birth, knowing its signs and recognizing its coming. No theologian, rather he was a moralist with religious fervour. McGready was run out of the Carolinas for "running people distracted and divesting them from their necessary vocations." Opposition became so strong that McGready got a letter signed in blood saying, leave the Carolinas or else!

Leave he did at age 38 in 1796 for three small churches in Logan County, Kentucky. His revival there began in 1797 and soon spread to all his churches by June, 1800. Many people were either swooning or shouting wildly under the impact of his preaching.

It was in July, 1800 at Gaspar Church that the first true camp meeting took place. The meeting was announced in advance and 13 wagon loads of people arrived coming from as much as 100 miles away. This meeting in turn led to the most famous of the meetings in August, 1801 in Bourbon County, Kentucky at Cane Ridge. It was planned by a McGready convert named Barton Stone in conjunction with various Baptists and Methodists. About 147 wagon loads of people filled the camp meeting.

Thus, the great Kentucky Revival began, a movement which, when Asbury got involved, was "regularized". It was exported back to the east with amazing effectiveness. Next we will look at the structure of these camp meetings.

## **6. Circle the Wagons**

Without question, the heyday of camp meetings was in the period

1800-1860. During the course of this period the meetings came to have certain characteristic features. For instance, in the early years, the camp meeting would last some 7 - 8 days and be an ecumenical venture. Asbury shortened this to a 4 day venture when he exported it back to the east because he knew city folk were not such a captive audience.

There were three basic patterns to the camp meetings - square, horseshoe, or the one Asbury preferred, circular. In the circular pattern there would be an outer ring of wagons, inside of which would be a circle of tents with fires in front of each tent. Inside this circle there would be the meeting area which included a partition down the middle to separate the men from the women. Here also was a platform with a pulpit for the preacher.

In the early meetings, preaching continued in shifts throughout the night. One Methodist invention was the mourner's bench, so called because those who needed to repent and deal with guilt also needed a place to go other than the altar. When ready for total commitment to Christ, then they could approach the altar.

It was Asbury in 1809 who thought of getting a ground floor prepared in advance, bringing in some wooden benches, and even erecting a wooden roof over the area. Thus, outdoor tabernacles were born. This led to camp meeting grounds springing up all over the eastern half of the U.S. Some of these meeting areas, such as Asbury Park in New Jersey, still bear the names of those who helped get them started.

The last night of the camp meeting would feature a great deal of singing, often many baptisms, and marching around the circle of the camp with pine cone branches held high, reminiscent of Joshua's troops circling Jericho, Spirits were indeed high by this point. . .

## **7. The One and the Many**

To understand the camp meeting you must first understand that people, especially west of the Appalachians, lived 6 to 10 miles from their nearest neighbors. These people experienced lonely and harsh times while trying to build their homes and eke out a living in the wilderness. We need to be aware that camp meetings must have served a great social as well as religious need. For these settlers, the need for fellowship and friends was indeed great.

Thus, the camp meeting became one part vacation, one part business trip, one part family reunion, and one part religious experience. In some ways, the camp meetings before Asbury's influence were rather like carnivals. There were salesmen of all sorts seeking to sell everything from shoes to farm tools to the latest elixirs. There were various ne'er-do-wells looking to seduce the 'innocent'. In short, the camp meeting

became a sort of temporary city with all the usual benefits and banes of city life. At their peak, when some 25,000 would arrive for a camp meeting, they were indeed small cities.

The camp meetings brought together people of all ages, races, and denominations. Out of these meetings grew friendships, weddings, business deals, and even religious conversions. This was the place to swap your best recipes, drag out your tallest tales, and let the children find new playmates.

People came to these meetings already in a holiday mood, ready for a change from the daily grind of dawn to dusk farming. It is safe to say that many came with pent-up feelings, and while at the camp meeting were able to let go and let God. As Harvey Cox says, "carnival behavior" prevailed and all sorts of human energies were let loose by the spirit.

The spiritual phenomena that resulted was often bizarre but never boring. Here a lonely person could come and become a part of something larger than himself. Here the one could mix with the many and not only make friends but also let down the barriers of protection used to survive in the wilderness. It has been suggested that the genius of the camp meeting was that the individual could lose himself in the masses and yet be found by God. By letting the barriers down, a person could come to terms with himself and join with others in a religious experience. This led to unusual forms of group behavior and in our next article we will analyze this phenomenon further.

## **8. "Holy Barking" and "The Jerks"**

Some of the first camp meetings were known for allowing things to get more than a little out of hand when the oceans of human emotion were let loose. Though men and women were regularly separated by a barrier, when the swooning and shouting got going the women were known to tear open their clothing and fall to the ground, or run around hugging and kissing friends and strangers alike.

The men and children were often seen to engage in one of the odder forms of motor response to preaching known as "holy barking". This involved dropping on to all fours and running about snapping and growling, even foaming at the mouth. Groups would surround a tree baying as if the devil himself were sitting in the branches. A more common reaction was what is now called "being slain in the Spirit." This would often happen to a group in the congregation at some dramatic point in the preaching. At that point they would fall into a "spiritual coma" which could last from a few minutes to several hours. There were reports that often people would preach sermons for an hour or more at an in-

credible volume while in this comatose state.

Perhaps, however, the most peculiar of the spiritual phenomena was called the "jerks". This arose in the Tennessee camp meetings and involved first the wild gyration of the head, followed by the arms and whole body until one became a veritable whirling dervish. Peter Cartwright, that most famous of Methodist Circuit Riders, said he saw as many as 500 people behaving in this way, no doubt in a sort of epileptic seizure. He once reported with real satisfaction that when some proper city women came to gawk at a camp meeting, suddenly they were taken with the "jerks" and could not control themselves. Cartwright judged that the Spirit had gotten hold of these souls and taught them a lesson - do not underestimate the power of God.

Surprisingly, Asbury and others relished the holy noise and other phenomena of the camp meetings. So long as there was no moral aberrations, they believed it to be of the Spirit. As Asbury saw it, these were evidences that God was working dramatically in a human life with the result being a morally and religiously changed person. The end thus justified the means, or perhaps the means manifested the dramatic transformation taking place. In our next article we will examine the Methodist restrictions on camp meetings.

## **9. Methodist Strictures**

Asbury and McKendree took part in their first camp meeting in the fall of 1800 in Drake's Creek, Tennessee. Both were very impressed with the potential of reaching so many people at once. In January of 1801 Asbury was already writing to his preachers urging them to have camp meetings as often as possible. By 1810 his enthusiasm still had not waned. He called for 10,000 Methodist camp meetings, writing his preachers, "Camp meetings, camp meetings, glory, glory!"

But things were to be done decently and in order, and so Asbury drew up some rules. First of all, Asbury felt the meetings lost their maximum impact by dragging on too long. Thus, he standardized a four day period from Friday through Monday. He would line up preachers in a certain order so that the better preachers would not come on until at least Saturday afternoon. This gave everyone plenty of time to arrive. The Bishop set up shifts for the preaching but insisted on a 10 p.m. curfew.

After the curfew Asbury had guards with armbands patrol the grounds to insure upright and moral behavior. To that end not only were torches to be kept burning all night, but also each tent was required to have a lit candle within. Needless to say, there was also to be a bucket of water outside each tent. Surprisingly, there was only one serious fire



at any camp meeting, and it was not a Methodist one.

Another Methodist innovation was introduced by Valentine Cook who decided to set up a wooden altar at the front of the meeting place. All who were willing to take the first step into the Kingdom were invited to come down to that pine altar to be met by Methodist lay workers.

Asbury had the camp meeting rules posted well in advance. Some complained that the trees became "lettered pillars. . . inscribed with the 12 tables of the camp code." Despite all the rules, some problems still arose. But circuit riders knew well how to deal with rabble rousers and ruffians. Finley would often come down from the pulpit, seize the offender, and shake him till his teeth rattled. James Haven, the so-called Napoleon of Indiana Methodism, once grabbed a ruffian by the hair and threw him to the ground. These were crude methods for a crude age.

Methodists often learned to improvise. If the crowd was not familiar with a hymn, no matter. The leader would sing it out a line at a time to a tune they did know.

Thus it was that through the concurrence of the Methodist connectional system and camp meetings, a combination of freedom and discipline, thousands came into the Methodist Church (10,000 in the Kentucky Revival of 1801-1808 alone). What lessons may we learn from all this? In our last article we will draw some conclusions.

## 10. Beyond the Frontier

Why is it that camp meetings and circuit riders served Methodism so well in the nineteenth century? Certainly one reason was that Methodist theology was well-suited for such a time and such meetings. Indeed, it was a Gospel tailor-made for frontier life.

Methodists preached that by God's grace you and your circumstances could be dramatically improved. Conversion was a need and a possibility for *everyone*. A person joined to God could do all things in Him who strengthened him. Conversion was called for over and over by the preacher, a conversion that could have visible results by changing behavior and character. This was a philosophy that stressed the importance of human decision and human potential enabled by grace. It was optimistic, and geared toward the power of positive thinking. As one author noted, Methodists preached a religious version of rags to riches.

Secondly, the connectional system of circuit riders was flexible enough to expand with the frontier, and smart enough to direct people from the camp meetings into the local Methodist chapels. Only the Methodists had such a network that could go and grow where the people were. If Methodism wishes to expand and grow today, it must again be flexible enough to plant new churches where the population is, or face be-

ing left behind. I suggest simple and flexible buildings that can meet many social needs for congregations of between 200-300 members, rather than large and costly building projects.

Thirdly, camp meetings met the social needs of the people. Perhaps churches should be used more for social events aimed at the community as a whole. Churches can also be used for counseling centers, day care centers, hunger centers - to meet the needs of the community 7 days a week. There is a desperate need in our fragmented society.

Finally, the early Methodists witnessed Spirit-filled worship services which today would help the Church enormously. Granted, we don't need the excesses often seen at camp meetings, but it would seem that Methodism has long since gone to the other extreme. Sometimes our attitude seems to be, 'Far be it from us to let the power of God break forth in the congregation.' Are we afraid of what God might do if we let go and let God?

It was said of the early Methodists that they prayed better with their eyes closed than with their eyes open. In worship services especially we should help our members articulate their faith in spontaneous prayer and without written prompting. *Order* we have, but *fervor* we need more of. Perhaps we should hear the call once again of the old spiritual, "Over Jordan, over Jordan, my heart longs to go into camp ground again."

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## FUND-RAISING CONSULTANTS: GETTING THE PROS, NOT THE CON

by Kevin A. Miller

A Pennsylvania pastor hired with high hopes a fund-raising consultant for his church. The previous year had been tough on the church. Local unemployment had soared to 26 percent. After nineteen years of meeting budget, the church ran a deficit of nearly \$28,000; only courageous tithing of severance pay by some who were faced into early retirement kept the shortfall to \$6,000.

The church knew it needed a solid financial base for the future, so it engaged a fund-raising consultant to lead a capital-funds campaign. "No problem," said the owner of the fund-raising company, a retired clergyman. "I'll find fresh money within the congregation, beyond what's already committed. With my trained staff of retired clergy doing the calling, I can promise success."

What he delivered instead, according to the pastor, were "additional expenses and lots of hard feeling." First, the consultant told the congregation to ignore any current financial commitments made to the church and pledge again, thus reusing previously pledged funds to make the new money raised seem greater. He ordered publications and materials, and billed them to the church without authorization. Finally, he misrepresented, or at least miscommunicated, his fee and billing schedule, and socked the church with unexpected charges.

The angry church dismissed the consultant and hired a different firm. This one, the pastor says, "has done a super job. They've been up front and honest; we know exactly what it's going to cost. I was unusually impressed with their evaluation of the church - no outrageous guarantees - and we're excited about the program we're doing together." The church's financial future looks bright.

Selecting the right consultant to lead a fund-raising campaign takes careful scrutiny. But finding a reputable and competent consultant is well worth the effort. Tapping their professional expertise, thousands of churches have constructed new sanctuaries, refurbished old ones, purchased land, and retired debts. "The church needs money to move," says one financial counselor, and each year consultants raise nearly a billion dollars in such "moving expenses."

Indeed, one factor complicating the choice of a fund-raising consultant is the sheer number available. The National Society of Fund-Raising Executives boast twenty-seven hundred members, and perhaps two thou-

sand firms work with churches. And this number does not include denominational officials who lead fund-raising campaigns.

A few firms are large, staffing several dozen consultants and working with more than a hundred churches during any given year. The vast majority of firms, however, are small, one- or two-person operations led by retired clergy or those who pastor part-time and raise funds on the side.

No regulatory agency governs fund raisers or sets minimum ethical standards. Despite the lack of controls, however, only a minute number of fund raisers could be considered unethical, according to people both within and without the industry.

Del Rogers, president of a Dallas-based consulting firm, says the horror stories stem not from malicious intent but the misguided content of some campaigns - programs relying on methods that create hard feelings.

As L.H. Coleman, executive vice president of Cargill Associates' church division, puts it, "The problem is not with integrity. The integrity level among consultants is high. It's the competence level that varies greatly." Every consultant considers his approach biblical, but some simply do not achieve acceptable results, or their tactics bruise parishioners. The critical issue for churches, then, is not so much finding a consultant who means well, but one who manages well.

The key in getting the right consultant is knowing what questions to ask **before** signing the contract.

### **Do We Need a Consultant?**

The first two questions are "Do we need a capital-funds campaign?" and if so, "Can we raise the money ourselves, or do we need outside help?" The answer to the first question depends largely on two guidelines:

A church's long-term debt should not be more than three times its annual operating income. If, for example, a church's annual income is \$250,000, it ought to take notice when its long-term debt passes \$500,000 and consider \$750,000 its ceiling.

A church ought not spend more than 30 percent of its operating income on debt service (principal and interest).

If a church approaches either of these limits, then it's time to consider a major capital campaign.

The answer to "Can we go it alone?" depends on how much money needs to be raised. "If it's a vibrant church, if the pastor has some gifts in fund raising, and if the need is less than their annual income, a church might consider doing it themselves," according to Coleman. "But if a church needs more than its annual income, it needs a consultant."

A consultant will almost always help a church raise more money than it could on its own, for a number of reasons: the firm's experience, their



organization, the fact that most pastors don't have the time to devote to a major fund-raising project.

"The consultant becomes a catalyst," says Vic Pentz, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Yakima, Washington, who recently began a capital funds campaign. "There's an aura about having someone come in from outside. It holds everybody accountable. You tend to work harder, to do things on schedule. Sometimes you think, 'Hey, we could do these things ourselves'. But you probably wouldn't."

It's not uncommon for pastors and boards considering hiring a professional to hit resistance.

"There's a lot of stigma in the church against a fund raiser," says one pastor who recently hired one. "The word conjures up an image of a fast-talking guy with a gold ring on his pinky." One pastor in the Southwest had strong support from his people to build a new building. The church hired a professional architect and contractor with little notice. Then it hired a professional fund raiser, and people objected, saying, "When it comes to money, we should trust God, not professionals." Pastors deliberating whether to employ a fund-raising consultant will need to factor in these emotional considerations.

### **What Can Consultants Deliver?**

Without question, consultants can deliver dollars - lots of them. The average campaign raises between two and four times a church's annual income (in pledges for a three-year period, beyond what people are currently giving). Thus, if a church's annual income is \$150,000 it could reasonably expect to raise between \$300,000 and \$600,000 in pledges during a campaign, and would normally see 80 to 90 percent of that come in over the next three years. This two- to four-times ratio seems constant across the industry. Even those pastors and boards who want to estimate conservatively can plan on at least one-and-a-half times their church income.

The average works the other way, too. Though there are true super-success stories, like the church with a \$230,000 budget that raised 2.1 million - over nine times its income - these are exceptions and should be regarded as such.

What does vary is the percentage of pledges made that *actually come in* over the next three years. Three churches in a major southwestern city recently held campaigns of similar size, and each raised approximately the same amount in pledges. In one church, less than half the pledged money ever hits the offering plates. In another, less than a third of the pledges were good. In the third, about 90 percent came in. When each percentage point represents thousands of dollars, the pay-up rate proves crucial.

So when considering a consultant, one factor to check is not only the level of pledges a firm can boast, but the records indicating the percentage of pledges that actually came in. The better firms generally see 80 to 90 percent of their pledges honored.

Firms will not guarantee these averages or any dollar amount, so though you can expect a certain level of pledges, you cannot hold the firm liable if that level isn't reached. As one fund raiser explains: "We can guarantee we will lead an organized campaign, but only you people and the Holy Spirit know what can happen in your church." And it is probably to pastors' advantage **not** to insist on a guarantee; any firm that guarantees its results will be sorely tempted to use high-pressure methods to succeed.

### **What Will It Cost Us?**

It's next to impossible to find out what a consultant will cost, short of actually having one make an initial visit and presentation to a church. A pastor cannot do comparison pricing by phone.

Consultants rely on a complex formula to compute their fees, and they are averse to divulging it. But some of the factors that affect the fee are:

**Location of the church.** Transportation costs comprise a major portion of the fee, so generally, the farther a church is from the firm's nearest office, the more it will pay. This may be reduced, however, if the firm is working with another church in the area at about the same time.

**What the money is for.** The easiest type of money to raise is that earmarked for a new sanctuary; the hardest money to raise is for debt retirement. Many firms adjust fees accordingly.

**Size of the church.** Usually, the larger the church, the more work for the consultant and the more printed materials that are needed, and thus, the more he or she will charge.

Other factors are disputed. One firm says the amount of money to be raised affects the fee; another says that doesn't enter in at all.

These variables result in some seemingly odd fees. Consider three recent campaigns led by three different fund raisers:

One church had a \$500,000 project; the firm's fee was \$30,000.

In another church, a firm raised close to \$1 million; its fee was \$27,000.

A third church raised \$1.5 million; the consultant charged \$22,000.

Consultants will divulge their fee when they make an initial evaluation and presentation, for which there is no charge. During this visit to the church, the consultant will explain his or her particular approach and answer questions.

Some firms take an entirely different approach to fees, earning a flat percentage of the money raised, say, one-half of 1 percent. At first glance this approach looks appealing. The compensation is tied directly to the results, and thus the firm will be highly motivated to bring in the money.

But in the system lurks great danger. Warns one professional: "Fund raisers that work on a percentage will be tempted to use hype and emotionalism to increase their take. They're more inclined to twist arms."

With either system, though, it's important that a church understand clearly what the consultant will provide and precisely what those services will cost.

Payment schedules vary. Some firms ask for 10 percent down, with the rest spread out over the length of the campaign, usually three to six months. Others require four equal monthly payments. But in any case, churches will have to pay all or part of the fee up front. They cannot expect to wait until the money is raised and use that money to pay the fees. Having said that, however, many consultants will arrange the payment schedule so that the last few payments are due after the dollars start flowing in, so at least a portion of the fee might be covered by the money raised.

### **Do Consultants Pay for Themselves?**

Most pastors considering an outside consultant will have to answer, to the satisfaction of the church, "How do you justify that hefty consulting fee?"

Records show that in most cases consultants have generated far more than their fees in dollars above what churches typically raise on their own. The church that "saves" the fee will usually net smaller results. Says L.H. Coleman, "usually the first person you contact in a campaign, you've more than paid for the fee," since most campaigns approach larger donors first.

Another way to consider the question is to figure what it would cost to borrow the money rather than hold a capital-funds drive. Say a church takes a \$500,000 loan to 10 percent interest over twenty years. The church will pay over six hundred thousand dollars *in interest* to the bank. Even if you allow for the congregation raising some money itself through "Debt Retirement Sundays," the church will pay several hundred thousand dollars in interest, which is not tax-deductible and benefits the church in no way.

On the other had, suppose the church takes the same loan but holds a capital funds campaign. If the campaign begins in January, dollars start arriving in April. Construction begins in say, June, with early campaign dollars helping pay for site preparation and architects' fees. By the next April, when construction is finished and the church is ready to put permanent financing in place, almost \$200,000 has come in (the first year is always highest). The church can thus borrow much less, about \$350,000 and pay that off over the next two years with the remaining campaign income. At the end of the third year, the church is

debt free and has paid well under \$100,000 in interest. Even adding a consultant's fee, the costs to the church are less than those in the first scenario.

### **What Will the Consultants Do?**

When a church contacts a fund-raising firm, a consultant will take information about the church, such as its size and characteristics, its annual budget, and how much the church wants to raise.

Then the consultant will meet the pastor and/or the decision-making body. Most will gladly return to make a presentation to the entire church, if desired.

During the presentations, the consultant will outline the time, activities, and fees involved, and what the church can reasonably expect to raise. The presentation usually sets a positive, forward-looking tone: "We can do this together." Words like *dreams*, *goals*, *potentials*, and *commitment* are favorites of fund raisers. There is no cost to the church for these initial contacts and presentations.

What will the person be like? Consultants, most often, have had experience as a pastor or church staff member at some point, or are very active laymen. And they are eminently likeable. One pastor describes the fund raiser his church hired: "He looks like a grandpa, smiles a lot, and touches you when he talks to you. He allays all your fears." Adds an industry observer, "You're always going to be dealing with nice people in this business. You aren't going to find any nasty people when they're trying to sell you a contract."

Should the church decide to hire the consultant, an agreement will be sent by mail for the church to sign. Once the contract is signed, a church cannot back out without some legal entanglements or paying the full fee, but this happens only rarely. And if internal problems come up in the church, say, a key staff member leaves or is fired, most firms will try to postpone the program for a while, if possible.

The campaign lasts from three to eight months, with about four months being average. Each fund raiser structures a capital campaign slightly differently, but most employ the following elements:

**An introductory meeting** to set an upbeat, positive tone in the congregation. In some firms' program, the consultant will address the congregation on Sunday morning in place of the pastor's sermon.

**An evaluation process.** The consultant tries to get a clear picture of the church's giving potential, attitude toward the project, and potential leaders. The information may come through a survey, or more often, through a meeting of five to twenty people, either the church's current leaders or a cross section of the membership.



Some firms use this evaluation period to identify the largest potential donors, either by looking at individuals' giving records or by analyzing their probable income based on home location and occupation. Other firms look only at giving patterns of the whole church. Most firms will press to see any records the church doesn't want to release, but churches should know the firm's usual practice and the information they request.

**Recruitment of leaders.** Based on the information gathered during the evaluation period, the consultant enlists a steering committee to lead the campaign. Typically, this committee includes about ten people who exhibit, in the words of one consultant, "spiritual leadership ability, natural leadership ability, and financial leadership ability." Since in most campaigns the top five gifts come from members of the committee, one might conclude the last criterion weighs quite heavily.

The steering committee then gathers other members of the congregation to help with the campaign. The campaign is usually carefully organized, with each person given a title - director, chairperson, captain, worker - and a clear job description. Through several training sessions, the consultant explains to each person his or her job and gives each a manual or notebook.

**First home visit.** Trained people from the church then call on people in their homes. During this fifteen- to thirty-minute visit, no one is asked to make a commitment. Instead, the visitors (ideally a couple, according to one consultant) talk briefly about the good things happening at the church, and ask what needs in the home they might pray for. The visit is intended primarily to establish a climate of support and expectancy.

Some firms use only one home visit during the campaign, during which they do gather commitments. Others rely on their own staff of trained clergy, rather than the church's lay people to make the visits.

Maynard Nelson, pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minnesota, has employed numerous consulting firms during his ministry, and has experience with both approaches. His view: "The outside visitors did the job, but it's much more effective using your own people if possible. It's better to involve large numbers of people and have broad ownership of the program and its goals."

During this early stage of the campaign, some consultants ask the pastor to meet with potential large donors, usually over dinner in private homes, to personally explain the program and enlist their support. Fund raisers hope to encourage, through this or other approaches, a lead gift that is 10 percent of the campaign goal.

**Prayer emphasis.** Some consultants set up twenty-four hour prayer vigils; others use prayer chains or other approaches.

**Informational period.** Also called a “promotional period,” this is the stage during which the church gives people the who-what-when-where-why of the program, in detail. “It’s not fair to ask people for money unless they know what’s going to happen to that money,” says Coleman. Brochures and newsletters are sent to church members, describing the projects, detailing the floor plan of the new building, and so on. Bible studies and Sunday school classes on Christian attitudes toward giving are held. The pastor preaches a four-week series of messages on stewardship. During the Sunday morning service each week of this period, a member gives a testimony, telling why he or she is excited about the church and program, and usually naming the specific amount he or she will be giving. Fund raisers look for a mix of wealthy and not-so-wealthy to give these testimonies; many firms ask the pastor to give the first one.

**All church gathering.** This is either a banquet or worship service. The pastor usually gives the keynote address, and selected members of the congregation talk about what God has done for the church in the past, what he’s doing in the present, and what he will do in the future. Often a slide show gives information and inspiration about the church and project. The consultant is usually not present for this event.

Some firms gather the campaign leaders at a “leadership challenge meeting” a few days before the banquet and ask them to make their commitment to the campaign. Then, at the banquet, the leaders’ commitments are announced, encouraging people that the high goal really is accessible. In some churches, the leaders alone contribute more than the church initially thought the entire congregation could give.

**A canvass period.** Most campaigns take people’s commitments during the first one or two weeks following the all-church gathering. Some firms train people to phone and make appointments, others just show up, but either way, people have been prepared through five or six newsletters and the pastor’s message to expect the visitors. The visitors talk about how exciting the banquet or worship service was. Then they “receive the commitment” by giving the people a card and envelope. The people write their commitment on the card, put it in the envelope, and seal it, so the visitors do not know the size of the pledge.

A few fund raisers have visitors suggest specific amounts for people to give, based on the people’s occupation and home location. One pastor in the West cancelled a campaign because of this practice. His members were being told, “We believe God would want you to give \$30,000” or whatever amount.

Other firms take a decidedly low-key approach. If a person says he or she does not want to make a commitment to the program, the visitors are trained to say, “We understand. Not everyone will be able to give.

We want you to know that we love you, and we know you're joining with us in prayer that God will have his way in our church."

Pastors can minimize hurt feelings by knowing ahead of time how a consultant approaches these visits and determining whether the congregation will feel comfortable with that approach.

**"Victory Day" or "Victory Service."** Here the results of the campaign are announced and celebrated. This is held one or two weeks following the all-church gathering.

**Follow-up.** The church office sends each contributor an acknowledgment letter and special envelopes, and then, each quarter, a record of his or her contributions. The church also sends a monthly income report to the consulting firm so it can monitor progress.

The consulting firm gives the church materials for programs or bulletin inserts to help keep giving active over the three-year period. The biggest problem for churches in the follow-up period is families who move. Some churches hold mini-banquets every three or six months to explain the program to new people in the church and gain their support.

### **What is Expected of the Pastor?**

All consultants place high value on the pastor's visible and verbal support of the campaign. "The pastor's role is vital to the success of the campaign," says Roy Austin, executive vice president of Resource Services, Inc. "The pastor is the leader, the spearhead."

Most consultants let the amount of the pastor's giving be his or her own decision, "hammered out on the anvil of prayer," as one puts it. Some describe what other pastors have given as examples. But a few actually name specific dollar amounts. One pastor invited a firm to give a presentation to the church board. The next morning the pastor and consultant met for breakfast. As they sat down, the consultant said, "Pastor, for this thing to fly, you'll have to tell your people you're going to give at least \$15,000 over the next three years."

Again, pastors will want to know beforehand what the consultant's approaches are.

### **How Do We Find the Right Consultants?**

Pastors and consultants will be working closely together for several months, so it's vital they see eye to eye. That means, first of all, the person needs to be a committed Christian and active in the local church. Beyond that, however, the consultant ought to mesh with the particular church.

"It's helpful to consider the consultant a short-term staff member who should meet all the criteria you apply to anyone else on staff," says Del Rogers. "Hire someone you can complement other people on staff, who

holds the same basic Christian commitment and theological stance.”

Pastor Vic Pentz agrees: “We looked for a consultant who had been successful in churches similar to ours, who would feel at home with our general approach.” Because of this rule of thumb, some pastors choose to use their own denomination’s fund raisers rather than a private firm. On the other hand, one pastor who has worked with both private and denominational fund raisers said the private consultant was more forthright and had a better organized program. Another said, “Our denominational people just didn’t seem to hustle as hard.” So churches will need to evaluate each option carefully.

Once these basics have been established, pastors and boards ought to check the consultant’s experience and track record: how long they’ve been in the business, how much they’ve raised on average, the percentage of pledges that came in.

Pastors are wise to ask for references - and contact them. “Good consultants are more than willing to give you an extensive list of previous clients,” says Arthur Borden, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. These references can tell whether the consultant reached their churches’ goals, and just as important, the methods they used. Did they promise more than they delivered, miscommunicate their fee or billing schedule, leave behind hard feelings?

One West Coast pastor who recently checked a consultant’s references found that in previous congregations the consultant had left a strong spiritual impact and people had come away with a firmer commitment to biblical stewardship. The pastor hired the consultant.

“I suggest to churches an old approach many mission boards have used to select missionaries,” says Del Rogers. “Ask the references for **other** people who have used the consultant but aren’t on the consultant’s list. Every consultant is going to list the best references. But when you ask those references for other references, you’re probably going to get a better picture.”

One church took this approach several years ago and found, on closer investigation, that some firms had averaged less than 60 percent of their pledges actually coming in. Again, this figure is only one part of the overall picture and may not be entirely the fault of the consultant. Maynard Nelson explains, “You can’t always blame the firm. Sometimes after they leave town, we pastors sigh with relief and say, “That program’s over; let’s get back to other areas of ministry.’ Sometimes we’re too busy to accept their counsel and do the follow-up.”

### **How Likely Is a Bad Experience?**

Some pastors fear congregational backlash from a fund-raising venture, but usually those fears are unfounded. However, “there are always



individuals who will claim some offense to justify why they're not giving," says a Midwest pastor who has led several campaigns. "One man in the congregation wrote me that he was not going to pledge until we changed the American flag to the right side in front of the church. But pastors usually report their members gave cheerfully and generously.

Other churches fear a capital-funds drive will siphon money from the general fund, but studies show this usually doesn't happen.

Provided the consultant is selected carefully and the campaign is supported faithfully, the odds of having a bad experience are slim. "I can't really say I've had any bad experiences," says Pastor Maynard Nelson, veteran of more than half a dozen campaigns. "Some consultants claimed better results than actually happened; others did not always communicate well. But in all cases, we raised not just dollars, but faith."

Nelson's church held a capital campaign several years ago to build a new building. After the three years were over, the church didn't want to slack back. "After all, the building was only a tool for outreach," says Nelson, "so we had another campaign to increase our missions giving."

Most pastors who have held fund-raising ventures can say the campaigns were times of renewed spiritual vigor in their congregations. People became more committed and united. Membership often grew. In the words of one pastor, "Stewardship and evangelism go hand in hand."

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# LOOKING BACK AT THE FORCES AND FACES OF AMERICAN EVANGELISM

## Introduction

The editors of *Christianity Today* recently asked a number of evangelical thinkers to assess the evangelical movement since its beginning following World War II. They examined it from the viewpoints of preaching, theology, missions, biblical scholarship, education, media, and parachurch organizations. The writers found that the movement, after more than 30 years, is still vital and more influential than ever. They also discovered many shortcomings and unfulfilled tasks. Here is their report:

## A Strange Turbulence

Theologically, this period of 30 years has been strange and turbulent. It began with a small evangelical movement and dominant theological figures; it is ending with a large evangelical movement and few established thinkers. Between then and now lie the decades that belonged to Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Tillich, and the Niebuhrs, giants whose voices are now stilled and whose influence has faded. Their successors could well have come from the evangelical world, but a vigorous, creative evangelical theology has not appeared to seize this moment.

Thirty years ago leadership was provided either by those who articulated a characteristically different way of evangelical thinking - such as Cornelius Van Til, Gordon Clark, John Murray, and J. Oliver Buswell - or who symbolized its growing ability to play on the same academic turf as everyone else - such as E.J. Carnell and Bernard Ramm. Thus were the seeds of discord unwittingly sown, seeds that have now produced deep internal disarray, for the responsibilities to Athens (the academy) and Jerusalem (the people of God) have become loyalties that are often in fierce competition with one another.

The laity 30 years ago was more doctrinally conscious and theologically literate than it is today. Indeed, the combined effects of "relational theology," charismatic experience, and the self movement might have eliminated theological interest altogether but for a group of remarkable - and remarkably patronized - popularizers: C.S. Lewis, who pungently kept evangelicals thinking; Francis Schaeffer, who kept alive the reali-

ty of a Christian world view; Martin Lloyd-Jones, who showed that theology could and should be preached; John Stott, whose seminal writings have shown how wholesome the Bible can be; and J.I. Packer, whose *Knowing God* in particular demonstrated that beneath all the evangelical fizz there is a deep spiritual hunger.

In the absence of fresh systematic writing from America, translated imports, such as G.C. Berkouwer and Helmut Thielicke, have taken on special significance, as have reprints from the Reformation period onward. Dictionaries have had to take up the slack, too, such as Colin Brown's *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* and, most recently, Walter Elwell's *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*.

In this period of fragmentation, when there has been little corporately owned theological understanding, particular issues have taken on a life of their own, often following erratic and even bizarre courses. Most troublesome have been the debates about Scripture (and inerrancy), women (and ordination), and evangelical commitment (and who may and may not be considered in the movement).

Some theologies, however, have been written. Donald Bloesch's *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* is a good update on key themes; Millard Erickson's recent three volumes of *Christian Theology* is also an able contribution. But pride of place must go to Carl Henry's six volumes, *God, Revelation and Authority*. It is a powerful, vigorous assertion of an orthodoxy whose toughness and stringency are precisely what evangelicalism needs to hear but apparently has been unwilling to read. That says only a little about Henry (whose style unfortunately does oscillate between being racy and being Teutonic) and much about evangelism.

It also raises an interesting question. There are rumors of various systematic theologies in the works. The time is undoubtedly ripe for theologians to capitalize on the rich harvest of biblical studies of recent decades, the maturing awareness of evangelical responsibility in culture and society, and the absence of serious competitors in the wider theological world. But if these theologies are written, will anybody read them?

This is the question of overall survival for twentieth-century evangelicalism. Given the pressures it must face, both from academia and our secular culture, it can hardly perpetuate itself intact if it reduces itself to being merely "born-again religion," sheared of a doctrinal structure, ethical seriousness, and a comprehensive world-view.

**By David F. Wells, Andrew Mutch Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.**

## Biblical Scholarship

### Small Beginnings, Rapid Progress

In 1956 evangelical Bible scholars had just begun to emerge from the intellectual wilderness. The public defeat of "fundamentalism" in the 1920s had meant that conservative views on the Bible almost disappeared from the American academic landscape. At Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, theologically orthodox scholars like Ned Stonehouse had continued to interact rigorously with academic literature. Stonehouse played a particularly important role in the 1940s by showing how cautious acceptance of certain procedures in modern scholarship could coexist with, and even enrich, evangelical faith. But this was an exception for the evangelical world that focused almost all of its attention on devotional uses of the Bible.

Several sources contributed to a rejuvenation of evangelical Bible scholarship in the 1940s and 1950s. First in time were developments in Britain under the umbrella of Inter-Varsity Fellowship that had been under way since the 1920s. Scholars from Scotland (such as F.F. Bruce), England (John Wenham), and from the British Commonwealth (Australia's Leon Morris) put university training to work in their efforts to understand the Scriptures. The publication of Bruce's *Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (1951), and soon thereafter of Inter-Varsity's *New Bible Commentary*, marked the visible return of first-rate evangelical work on Scripture. Soon Bruce and a number of other individuals not prejudiced against orthodox convictions were directing doctoral studies by American evangelicals at several major British universities.

Another source of renewal came from the "new evangelical" movement, which inspired, among other things, the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary. By the mid-1950s several Fuller scholars, especially George Ladd, were pointing the way to a restrained, yet academically responsible engagement with modern criticism. The series on *Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, edited by Carl Henry (1957), as well as J.I. Packer's *"Fundamentalism" and the Word of God* (1958), showed how a high view of biblical authority could coexist with honest scholarship.

Soon evangelical publishers began to solicit scholarly volumes. In the forefront was Eerdmans in Grand Rapids, which published not only individual works by scholars such as Bruce, Ladd, Henry, and Morris, but also sponsored the *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, the first academic series under evangelical auspices since the fundamentalist era.



From small beginnings, evangelical Bible scholarship has made rapid progress. Now the major evangelical seminaries employ Bible faculties with training from the best universities in the world. Evangelicals contribute roughly 10 percent of the articles to the major New Testament journals and fill about the same proportion of slots at the annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature. Organizations such as the Evangelical Theological Society, the Institute for Biblical Research, and the Wesleyan Theological Society also encourage detailed work.

With progress, of course, come also new problems. In the 1980s evangelical organizations and institutions have had to struggle with the degree to which believing perspectives can accommodate the latest results from the academic establishment. Old Testament scholars still find it harder to reach common ground with nonevangelicals than do those who study the New Testament. As always, evangelical scholars face the twin dangers of compromising the solid results of research for fear of offending traditionalists in the church. However, unlike the situation in 1956, a large corps of professionally capable scholars exists today to offer guidance for work on these knotty matters.

**By Mark A. Noll, professor of history at Wheaton College, and author of the book *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelical Bible Scholarship since 1880*.**

## Preaching

### Matter-of-fact Intensity

"The faith of Christ does not parallel the world, it intersects it. In coming to Christ, we do not bring our old life up onto a higher plane; we leave it at the Cross."

So preached A.W. Tozer thirty years ago. Now better known for his devotional writings, Tozer, along with men like Charles E. Fuller, Walter Maier, Jack MacArthur, and Billy Graham epitomized the preachers of the 1950s, offering a no-nonsense gospel in their straightforward style.

Thirty years later, the tone of preaching has become less prophetic. Pastors seem less willing to risk being offensive, emphasizing instead the therapeutic value of their messages. "A generation ago, preaching aimed at rending the conscience," said one long-time preacher. "Today it seems every sermon must address some personal or family need. The pulpit has become a counseling tool."

Not that the preaching art was without its problems in the fifties. A 1946 editorial in *Christianity Today* lamented, "Even some of the soundest

evangelical congregations have little appetite for the meat of the gospel. Nor may the preacher presuppose any diligent study on the part of the pew in preparation for the message. He must make the message light and airy to sustain interest." In 1986, no longer a lament, it has become an accepted fact: preachers cannot *assume* listeners are interested; they must *earn* a hearing. But today's preacher has also learned that messages need not be "light and airy" to sustain interest. Substance can be communicated in ways congregations will accept.

Preachers today, largely inspired by the example of Charles Swindoll, find one key is to *identify* with the audience. While pulpits in the fifties tended to preach God's Word to "you," preachers in the eighties tend to explain God's word to "us." An example is one pastor's recent sermon on adultery. Instead of directly condemning it, he identified with the problem: "It's not hard to see why people commit adultery. A chill sets in at home. Fatigue or stress or minor irritations add to the growing distance between you and your spouse..." This pastor made it clear that he understood the problem, then went on to discuss the self-consuming side of this potential addiction and God's promise of freedom. Such sermons are not light and airy, but they sustain interest by realistically describing life's situations.

A second recent emphasis in preaching has been the importance of using well-told *stories and illustrations*. "The Bible says" carries little weight in today's secular audience. The person responsible for communicating God's Word to modern man must make it come alive. While the power of Scripture is unchanged, today's preacher has shifted the emphasis more toward a judicious use of contemporary examples to illustrate Scriptural principles.

Finally, the effect of television has profoundly affected preaching *style*. Television has conditioned viewers to get information quickly in short blasts or "capsules." Real-life dramas are developed and solved in 30 minutes. In newscasts, world issues are given 90 seconds, and experts are asked to sum up "in the 15 seconds we have left." Most preachers meet this challenge by composing shorter sermons.

Television, an intimate medium, also zooms in close, and viewers have learned to watch for subtle expressions rather than grand gestures. Sweat-drenched preachers with arms flailing might have communicated well in cavernous convention halls or outdoor amphitheaters 50 years ago, but with the advent of TV, the new model of credibility and clarity is the network newsman who speaks with a matter-of-fact intensity. This calm authority is the trademark of speakers like James Dobson, and is, perhaps, one factor in their popularity.

Are these changes progress or regress? It is difficult to say. But the

goal of preaching remains the same: to apply God's timeless Word in timely ways.

By Marshall Shelley, managing editor of *Leadership*

## Missions

### World Evangelism

One word says it all for 30 years of North American foreign mission agencies: *growth* — staggering, surprising growth.

The economic prosperity of American churches (and American society generally), religious freedom, and the entrepreneurial spirit have all coalesced to give birth to more agencies than there have ever been. While some smaller agencies threw in their lot with larger ones, new ones arrived and hit the trail for money and recruits at a feverish pace. Today some 700-plus agencies serve overseas.

The younger agencies tended to seize on some unique, narrowly focused ministry, or they successfully captured youth's zeal to do something on short notice that could be seen to make a difference in some hurting part of the world - Youth With a Mission and Operation Mobilization, for example. Some new agencies, like Mission Society for United Methodists, owed their birth to new evangelical groupings in U.S. mainline churches.

In terms of money, agencies reporting figures to the latest Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center (MARC) survey said they have received more than \$1 billion for overseas work, which is an all-time high. Less than 20 years ago the total was \$317 million. In terms of personnel, in 1956 there were some 30,000 North American Protestant missionaries; today there are 68,000.

Hidden in that 68,000 total is a highly significant trend: 30,000 of these people are short-term, as opposed to career, missionaries. Only 6 years ago short-termers numbered 18,000 and 30 years ago the idea was barely thinkable. You volunteered for a lifetime commitment to foreign missions - or not at all.

What missionaries actually *do* has also changed, from traditional pioneering to institutional work. Probably no more than a quarter of today's missionaries are now front-line troops doing raw evangelism. This is true partly because churches have been planted in astounding numbers in the last three decades - foreign missionaries have an enviable track record of accomplishing what they set out to do. It is also true because institutional work absorbs more and more money and more and more people in such ministries as schools, hospitals, radio stations, and

printing and publishing establishments. Today the missionary vocation, short-term or long-term, is basically the same as any existing vocation in the U.S.

But pioneering hasn't been forgotten, thanks to new impetus to track down and evangelize pockets of people yet to be touched with the gospel. If the church-growth movement forced missionaries to use social science research to plant churches among responsive peoples, the unreached-peoples movement has forced them to forge unique strategies to gain a hearing among narrowly focused tribal entities.

Also, in the last decade or two, U.S. missionaries have looked over their shoulders to find thousands and thousands of co-workers joining their ranks - not from stateside churches, but from churches that previous generations of missionaries had founded. World evangelism is in fact now the task of the world church. And that is perhaps the most significant trend of all.

**James W. Reapsome is director of Evangelical Missions Information Service and editor of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Wheaton, Illinois.**

## Education

### Proliferation and Cooperation

Over the last three decades, evangelicals have been prolific, creating more than 40 new Christian liberal arts colleges, nearly a dozen new theological seminaries, and numerous Bible institutes and schools, many based in local churches. Prominent television preachers have put enormous effort into founding and marketing Christian colleges like CBN University, Liberty University, and Oral Roberts University - showing once again just how closely intertwined are the church's dual tasks of evangelism and education.

With the maturation of postwar "baby-boomers," Christian college enrollments surged, in part because many parents saw these institutions as relatively safer than the turbulent public mega-universities awash in student protest, drugs, and sexual liberalism.

More noteworthy than this growth in the number, size and diversity of institutions of Christian higher education has been the rapid improvement in the quality of academic programs and facilities during the last 15 to 20 years.

Most dramatic, however, have been the gains made in assembling a dedicated, well-prepared group of Christian scholar-teachers. The colleges have insisted on their right to appoint men and women to their



faculties who are avowedly Christian - even when the teachers' subject areas are not explicitly religious. This practice has sometimes been challenged by private plaintiffs and governmental agencies alleging discrimination on religious grounds. But Christian liberal arts colleges find their essential distinctives in the active integration of the Christian faith with each of the disciplines and across the entire curriculum.

Faculty members are now expected to lead and coach students in the development of a comprehensive Christian world view in which biblical perspectives are shown to be relevant to all fields of study. Since the early 1970s scholars in nearly every discipline have organized a professional society for those intent upon developing Christian perspectives in their specialties. These "guilds of believing scholars," such as the Society of Christian Philosophers, the Conference on Faith and History, and the American Scientific Affiliation, constitute a powerful resource for Christian higher education.

The Christian colleges have also recognized the benefits of cooperation. The 13-member Christian College Consortium and the larger Christian College Coalition (with approximately 70 institutions) offer mutually helpful programs and shared resources. Similarly, the Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents unites more than 40 theological schools in mutual support. Such close cooperation would have seemed impossible 30 years ago.

Evangelicals have also been attending seminary in record numbers. Some seminaries have experienced five- and even tenfold increases in their student bodies. Equally striking has been the increased diversity of the student bodies, including more minorities, women, and second-career people.

In the last 15 years, typical seminary course offerings have proliferated and new degrees have appeared. Instead of one basic divinity degree, most seminaries now offer a number of graduate degrees, including in-service continuing education leading to the Doctor of Ministry.

Of course, evangelical higher education still faces some serious challenges and questions. Will there be a top-flight Christian research university (now no closer to realization than when it was first discussed 30 years ago)? Will evangelical colleges and seminaries be able to sustain their enrollments as the traditional pool of students continues to shrink? Will students and their parents sufficiently value a distinctive Christian education or will they opt for more vocationally oriented, less costly training in state universities and community colleges? And will Christian colleges be able to maintain their identity as sectarian secularism, the courts, and governmental agencies, challenge them at

the point of their theological and moral distinctives?

By George K. Brushaber, president, Bethel College and Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

## Media

### The Language of the Age

In 1927, G.K. Chesterton visited America and observed the lack of spiritual culture among its people. "Their culture comes from the great cities; and that is wherever all the evil comes from." His central objection was not so much that the cinema goes to places like "Oklahoma, as that it does not come from Oklahoma."

Since 1956, however, American culture has been penetrated, and some would say saturated, from places like Oklahoma, Virginia, and Illinois.

Thirty years ago radio dominated Christian communication. It was a remarkably appropriate and effective vehicle for the evangelical church, whose central mission was the preaching of the Word. The mighty voices of men like Charles E. Fuller and Theodore Epp brought audiences back to the Bible for old-fashioned revival.

In October, 1961, M.G. "Pat" Robertson established his Christian television station, giving birth to the Christian Broadcasting Network. CBN attempted to reach Christian and non-Christian audiences by mixing religious programs like the "700 Club" with family entertainment.

The print media has paralleled both the dramatic rise of broadcasting and the evangelical and charismatic movements. The publishing work of Pat Zondervan and the revolutionary publishing of Kenneth Taylor's Living Bible whetted an appetite for reading in an age of electronic media.

One of the most significant changes since 1956 has been the evangelical response to the cinema. In its first year of publication, a contributing editor of *Christianity Today* questioned whether he should "support Hollywood or the Kingdom of God." Three decades later a CT survey revealed that clergy attend more films than their church members.

In 1956, Cecil B. DeMille lured a neglected church audience to his "reverential" spectacular, *The Ten Commandments*. Today, *Chariots of Fire* and *The Color Purple* draw the faithful into the film fold. Television, in part, enabled the film industry to invade the home and thus attract evangelicals into the once-forbidden theatres.

Recognizing that "faith comes by hearing and sometimes by seeing," World Wide Pictures began to preach through films like *The Hiding Place*. With them, however, and alternative Christian cinema is now evolving behind the talents of Ken Curtis, John Schmidt and others.

Although gospel radio missions, such as Far Eastern Broadcasting Company and Trans World Radio, now stretch across international boundaries and reach millions in restricted areas, radio has been eclipsed by the phenomenal growth of television evangelism.

The dominant ritual of our technological civilization has become television viewing. Malcolm Muggeridge declared that TV and the media are "incomparably the greatest single influence in our society today," and a destructive and malign one at that.

In contrast to the witty but dour pessimism of Muggeridge, Billy Graham in 1978 attributed the effectiveness of evangelism "not only to the power of the Holy Spirit, but to the fact that the broadcasting media have been open to us. I believe one of the greatest factors in the religious resurgence in this country has been the impact of religious radio and television."

Rex Humbard pioneered television evangelism, joining the ever-popular Fulton J. Sheen on the small screen. The first to buy network time for religious programming, Humbard introduced his "Cathedral of Tomorrow," a rousing, evangelistic Ed Sullivan-like church service with entertainers like Mahalia Jackson attracting a wide audience.

Encouraged by Humbard, Oral Roberts entered the new medium, showing God's miraculous workings on prime time, and bringing a slick, contemporary flair. Others, like Jerry Falwell, Jimmy Swaggart, and Robert Schuller, followed, adopting either the old radio preaching format or the increasingly popular talk-show approach.

Over 30 years ago, C.S. Lewis identified the missionary task of the church as presenting "that which is timeless (the same yesterday, today and tomorrow) in the particular language of our own age." The dominant language of our own age continues to be the mass media, and our business continues to be to use these tools to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ.

**By Terry Lindvall, associate professor of communications at CBN University, Virginia Beach, Virginia.**

## **Parachurch**

### **Impatient to Do God's Work**

No other trait more sharply identifies contemporary American evangelicals than their parachurch pattern of organization. While many millions of Americans can affirm evangelical doctrines, the people and congregations who identify most strongly with "evangelicalism" are those who feel at least as much at home with this vast network of independent

religious agencies as with their particular denominations.

"Evangelicals" and "parachurch" have become nearly synonymous in recent decades because evangelicals have been, by and large, the "displaced persons" of mainline Protestantism, whether or not they have actually left the older denominations. The fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the 1920s prompted evangelicals to found independent organizations to carry out their gospel mandate. Bible institutes, colleges, seminaries, publishing and broadcasting works, mission agencies, evangelistic ministries, interdenominational and professional fellowships, and eventually public action committees all have been spawned by evangelicals' grassroots religious vitality and distrust of the liberal Protestant establishment.

Trends since World War II have accelerated this pattern. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a new generation of evangelical leaders began to emerge. They were impatient with both churchly and sectarian efforts to do the Lord's work, seasoned in the methods of modern business and publicity, and hopeful of pursuing a "world vision" of Christian revival and expansion. From their efforts came the National Association of Evangelicals, Youth for Christ, World Vision, the Christian Business Men's Committees, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, *Christianity Today*, and scores of other ministries.

The success of these "flagship" agencies of evangelicalism has encouraged a seemingly endless proliferation of such groups. Parachurch growth accompanied later evangelical surges, such as the charismatic movement, the drive for evangelical social action, and the recent mobilization of the religious New Right.

The parachurch pattern of organization has obvious advantages. It allows Christians to band together quickly in a common cause where there is an apparent need for collective witness. They need not lobby for support within a large and diverse denomination, or fear censure within a tightly controlled sect. Parachurch organizations encourage innovation yet pose no risks to other ministries. And because of new rules that enforce church-state separation, special-purpose organizations may provide the only opportunities for Christian witness in public affairs.

However, these independent agencies pose problems as well. Often controlled by one person or a coterie, such groups offer few chances for constituents to help shape their direction. And despite the standards set by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, the books of many agencies remain closed.

Since the parachurch often favors corporate models of management and "marketing," its agencies seem no closer to biblical standards for decision making and leadership than bureaucratic denominations. Self-



seeking individualism threatens to unravel our churches and nation, but parachurch groups, as enclaves of the like-minded, cannot reconcile diverse people and provide true community.

As long as evangelicals remain minority parties outside the Protestant establishment, they will need parachurch groups to pursue their callings. But as long as they preach a gospel that accepts all penitents "just as they are" and grafts them into Christ's body, they will need congregations and denominations. Para-church, after all, means alongside of, in support of, the church.

**By Joel Carpenter, assistant professor of history, Wheaton College (Ill.).**

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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

## **An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion**

William J. Abraham

Englewood Cliffs: Prentiss Hall, 1985

258 pages. \$16.95 (p.b.)

### **HARD FACTS OR SOFT RATIONALISM**

There was a time in the course of the intellectual history of the Western World when philosophy was seen as the handmaiden of theology. It's function was to aid in the process which Anselm called "fides quaerens intellectum" - faith seeking understanding. Nowadays, however, philosophy seems to have a rather different job description altogether.

Few and far between are the Alvin Plantingas or Thomas Morris or John Hickses who see philosophy and religion as still having a vital relationship to one another. They still see that an essential task of philosophy is to expand and expound upon theological concepts such as sin, evil, freedom, incarnation, predestination, and others. In the post Wittgensteinian age of doing philosophy, however, one is much more apt to find a philosopher who: a) is interested in linguistic analysis and theories of meaning per se; b) fundamentally is a logician; c) sees it as his chief task to explore the presuppositions and epistemologies of various modern schools of thought; or d) is interested in the interface between philosophy and various other academic subjects such as science or history. Philosophy, then, has come a long way from the days in the Middle Ages when it was so preoccupied with the "rational" proofs for the existence of God.

In our post-modern era, philosophy of religion has often been looked upon, both by philosophers and theologians, as more of a step-child than a handmaiden and thus has been seldom embraced. At best, philosophy of religion has been seen as a small subset of the general subject called philosophy - and set aside for those with antiquarian interests and tendencies.

The reasons for this state of affairs is complex. It is due in part to the widely accepted judgement that religious language is not cognitive, that is, that such language may tell us reams about the subject which speaks such language, but it tells us little or nothing about objective reality, never mind the 'absolute' or ultimate reality.

Into this foreboding environment, William Abraham has launched an ambitious primer entitled, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. This book is ambitious not only because of the intellectual climate into which it has been thrust, but also because for some time now students

of philosophy have cut their teeth on John Hicks' *Philosophy of Religion*, now in its third edition. Further, Abraham seeks to say a little something about most every major topic philosophy of religion has ever dealt with, as a scan of the chapter titles will show: 'Religious Language', 'Natural Theology', 'Religious Experience', 'The Problem of Evil', 'Religion and Morality', 'Miracles', 'World Religions', 'Life After Death', 'Christianity and Marxism', 'Grace and Freedom', etc.

As one might expect, herein lies the strength and weakness of this book. Sometimes the morsel is so small that instead of whetting the appetite, it simply frustrates the taster. Can the reader really be properly introduced to the philosophical questions involved in a discussion of world religions in 13 pages? There is some virtue, though, for the beginner to have a relatively complete menu before them at the start even if the presentation of the entrees is more evocative than descriptive. On this score, Abraham is more useful than Hicks in showing the range of subjects involved in the discipline.

In the beginning (p. xiii) Abraham admits that he will follow a somewhat eclectic procedure - sometimes surveying an issue, sometimes discussing one argument, sometimes commenting on one author's argument. This leads a certain unevenness to the book and a lack of thoroughness at some points. It also becomes apparent that there is a troika of authors who will serve as a foil for Abraham's comments on various subjects - namely, Hicks, Plantinga, and Richard Swinburne. In some cases, the book begins to read like a running critique of one or the other of these three scholars. This is necessary at some points because Abraham is trying to give an apologetic for his own approach to philosophy of religion or to one of its major topics vis-a-vis his closest colleagues in the field.

What then are Abraham's aims besides introducing philosophy of religion to the beginner? Clearly one aim is to show the value and validity of philosophy in general and philosophy of religion in particular to an otherwise skeptical audience. Abraham is sensitive to the suspicion philosophy labors under especially in the Christian community and in particular among evangelicals. Thus, Abraham wishes to show that philosophy of religion can be profitable study even for the orthodox. It should not be surprising then that Abraham admits at the outset that he will focus on questions that the Christian faith has found crucial. A more appropriate title might be 'An Introduction to the Philosophy of the Christian Religion'. The actual title is a bit misleading.

Another aim is apparent as one works through the various chapters. Abraham, in contradiction to Plantinga, is taking an Arminian approach to various important issues such as the relationship of grace and human



ability, God's sovereignty, and human free will. It should then not be surprising that John Wesley's name appears frequently in this work on philosophy of Christianity.

Several salient features remain with the reader. First, this book is much more readable than many of the analytical and arid tomes now available on the philosophy of religion. Thus, Abraham's style helps to achieve his aims. Further, Abraham has presented a useful case for the view that philosophy of religion can still serve as a handmaiden to theology in four regards: 1) as a sort of *preparatio evangelici*, clearing away unnecessary intellectual roadblocks to hearing and responding to the Christian faith on its own terms (as such it can serve as an apologetic tool); 2) it can aid in drawing out the logical implications of and work out the contradictions in a particular Christological world view; 3) it can help provide an epistemological foundation for discussions between Christianity and other religions and various other forms of truth seeking; 4) it can aid Christianity in its ongoing task of self-definition.

Abraham has done a useful job of arguing for the value and validity of religious language, the possibility and importance of revelation and miracles, the necessity of dealing with the problem of evil, as well as with all the hard facts of reality if one's world view is to be adequate. On the other hand, his treatment of the traditional proofs of the existence of God is much too cursory, especially in regard to the ontological argument and especially so since this has been in the past a central and vital part of any study of philosophy of religion. It would have been useful also if there had been bibliographies at the end of each chapter to guide the student into further reading.

All in all, this book may be termed an exercise in soft rationalism even as it tries to deal with hard facts. The book has a cumulative effect, so that the weaknesses in some parts of the study do not detract from the worthwhileness of the work as a whole. Likewise, Abraham shows that the case for Christianity must be made cumulatively using a variety of data and arguments. Certainly this is a book with more strengths than weaknesses and should be applauded for its clarity and variety.

Long ago, Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, relegated the great philosophers of the pre-Christian era to the first circle of Hades, a dungeon from which they and their subject have never entirely escaped in the minds of many believers. It may be hoped that this book may go some way toward rehabilitating philosophy, if not particular philosophers, as an important subject for the religious community. If it achieves no more than this it will have still served a very worthwhile purpose.

— The Editor

## **Woman in the Bible**

by M.J. Evans

Downers Grove: I.V. Press. 1983. 160 pages

\$5.95

## **EQUALITY AND THE EVANGELICAL WOMAN**

The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes said more than he realized when he remarked, "Of the making of books there is no end..." At least for the last two decades this particular remark could quite easily be applied to one particular topic - women in the Bible. The sheer volume of material on this one subject is staggering and indicates the keen interest in women's roles in the church and Christian community. Clearly, the sexual revolution of our age has had its impact on the church. The weight of material written on women in the Bible, however, is not proportionate to its worth, and so perhaps there is some reason for yet another book.

Mary Evans has attempted to provide an overview of the relevant biblical data in 160 brief pages and for this reason alone it is worth reading. In an age of specialized studies this book is for those who want a study that is conversant with most of the scholarly work in the field, but also succinct and conversational in style while still being comprehensive in its coverage. The reader looking for an attempt to apply the data to today's church situation will go away disappointed, but the person who wants an introduction to what the relevant data is may find this book very useful.

The book is divided into five chapters of varying length and quality. We get a scant 11 pages of background material to help set the social milieu in which the NT material was written. When we contrast this with some 54 pages of Paul's epistles alone, we see that the stage was set very quickly so that major players can appear as soon as possible. Unfortunately, this leads to a caricaturing of much of the background material so that it is pitted over against the 'more enlightened' views of Jesus and Paul at almost every point. It is also unfortunate that the Jesus material gets an all too brief 13 page treatment. Once again, one is left with the impression that it is Paul, and not Jesus, that is the real bone of contention. A more balanced approach would have been more helpful. Nevertheless, it is in the Pauline material that the author in fact sheds some light and so helps to advance the discussion. The chapter on the OT is of moderate usefulness, as are the sections of chapters four

and five that deal with non-Pauline material, but, unfortunately, the non-Pauline material is much too speedily dispatched (6-7 pages). In this case, less is not more.

In one regard this book may be compared to other semi-popular treatments on this subject by L. Swidler, the Staggs, or J. Danielou, but a more fruitful point of analogy lies in the other attempts by Evangelical scholars to deal with this subject. Clearly Ms. Evans writes from, and to some extent for, a conservative audience and so should be compared to the attempts of P.K. Jewett, G.W. Knight, J.B. Hurley, S. Foh, or V. Mollenkott, to name but a few. For those not of an Evangelical orientation, Evans' treatment of both the OT and Gospel material will appear to be either pre- or non-critical. Then too, the author's failure to use inclusive language (she repeatedly refers to man and mankind in generic terms) will alienate even some of her own Evangelical audience. This is unfortunate because she has many useful things to say from a more egalitarian point of view within the Evangelical camp.

Ms. Evans presents a carefully reasoned (and reasonable) apology for the basically egalitarian orientation of the early church and its major founders, Jesus and Paul (provided one accepts her conservative presuppositions). She does, however, strain credulity at points when she tries to argue that Paul himself was *not* a supporter of the traditional family structure in which the husband's headship implied a certain authority and role. Further, is it really believable that Paul did *not* intend his readers of I Corinthians 11 and 14, I Timothy 2, and Ephesians 5 (if the latter texts are Pauline) to deduce that there was a creation order structure to male-female relationships that was to be *reaffirmed* in Christ and had implications for both appearance and behavior? Whether or not one agrees with Paul, it is more than a little difficult to make him appear to be egalitarian in all his utterances. Nonetheless, Ms. Evans is to be commended for not taking the easy route out and simply writing off certain texts, or the Apostle himself, as hopelessly contradictory on the issue of women and their roles in the Christian community. Her approach is consistent, even-handed, and avoids majoring in minors.

Without doubt there will yet be more books written on this subject and undoubtedly there will be better ones. There are few, however, that have come forth from Evangelical writers that are more readable or useful than *Woman in the Bible* from a generally egalitarian point of view. Evans avoids stereotyping women into the Eve or Mary camp, and makes clear the new freedom and sense of equality those first female converts must have sensed in the early church. In this and several other regards she has helped the ongoing discussion.

— The Editor

### Advertisement — The Brethren Encyclopedia

The first volume in a series of monographs related to Brethren history has just been released by the publishers of *The Brethren Encyclopedia*. The initial monograph, written by Hedwig T. Durnbaugh, is *The German Hymnody of the Brethren, 1720-1903*.

The series will include books of interest to all five Brethren bodies: The Old German Baptist Brethren, The Brethren Church, The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, The Dunkard Brethren, and The Church of the Brethren.

According to William R. Eberly, editor of the series, titles to be published will be of special benefit to reference libraries and scholars but will have some appeal also to the general reader. The monograph series will feature well documented studies of various aspects of Brethren life and thought, reflecting the common heritage of the Brethren movement that originated in Schwarzenau, Germany in 1708.

Distribution of the new series will be facilitated by denominational sales offices of related Brethren groups and by direct mail from the Brethren Encyclopedia office, 313 Fairview Avenue, Ambler, PA 19002.

Now available for distribution is a comprehensive study of German language Brethren hymnbooks, written by Hedwig T. Durnbaugh, librarian for special collections and cataloging at Bethany Theological Seminary in Oak Brook, Illinois. Her book, entitled *The German Hymnody of the Brethren, 1720-1903*, examines the hymns in eight major German hymnbooks and several smaller collections. The author identifies the hymn writers, analyzes the theology of the texts, and describes unique threads of Brethren faith and witness.

The main body of the study consists of nine chapters which deal with the eight hymnals in chronological order, plus a chapter on smaller hymn collections. Each chapter provides a description of the hymnal under discussion, with special attention given to possible or definitely Brethren-authored hymntexts. The greater portion of the monograph consists of lengthy indexes providing access to the individual hymns under a variety of aspects: 1) first line index of all hymns appearing in all the hymnbooks; 2) publishing record of texts; 3) index of melodies; 4) index of hymnwriters.

The editor of the Brethren Monograph Series is William R. Eberly, professor of biology at Manchester College, North Manchester, Indiana. His interest in Brethren history has been reflected in several years of leadership in the Brethren Historical Committee and the Fellowship of Brethren Genealogists, in the publication of a history of the Church of the Brethren in Northwestern Ohio, in the compilation of a genealogy



of the Whitehead family, and in his personal collection of Brethren hymnals and songbooks.

Overall direction of the Brethren monograph series is under the supervision of the Board of Directors of *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, Fred W. Benedict, president. Following the publication of the encyclopedia, a three-volume reference work that appeared in 1984 and 1985, the Board of Directors decided to consider the publication of other materials in interest to all five Brethren groups.



